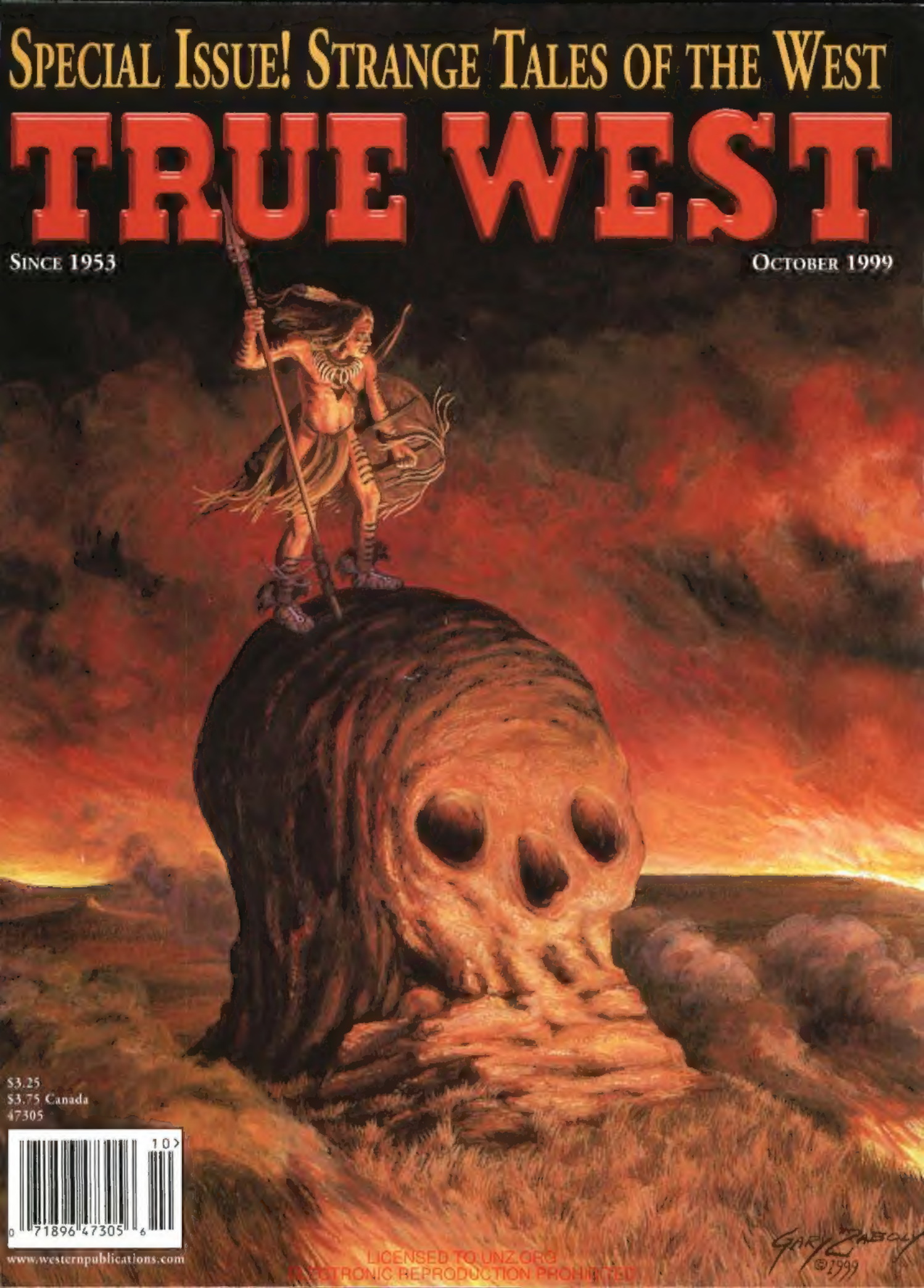
SPECIAL ISSUE! STRANGE TALES OF THE WEST

TRUE WEST

SINCE 1953

OCTOBER 1999



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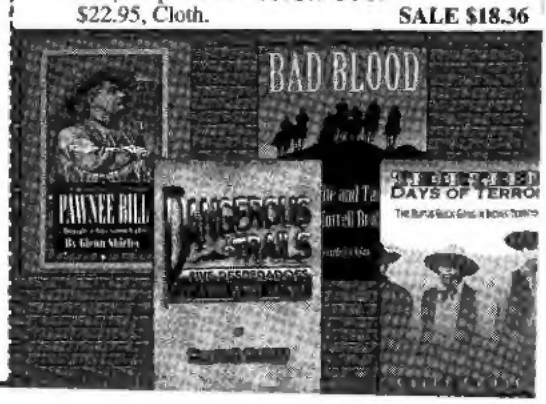

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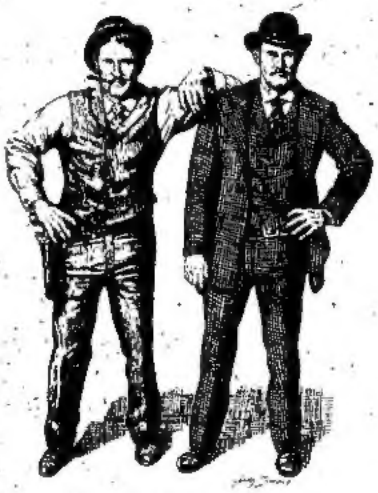

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FEATURES

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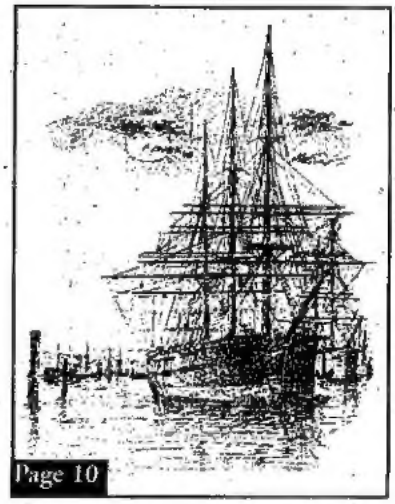
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Strange Tales of the West

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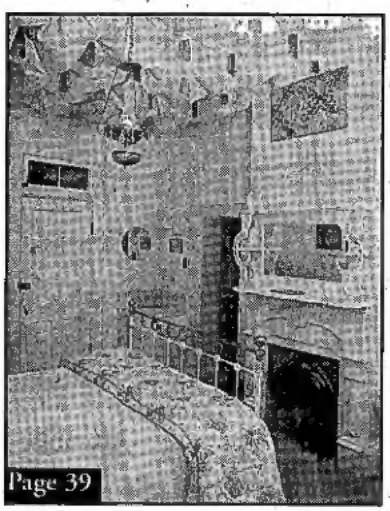
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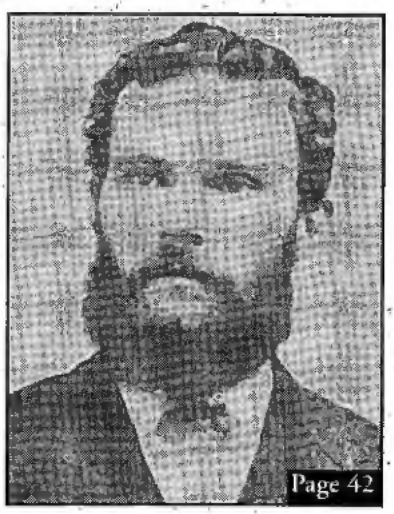
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FROM THE EDITOR

Howdy, ya'll!

The third time is a charm, or, in this case, the third time is a spook. Welcome to our third annual "Strange Tales of the West" special issue. For new readers this undoubtedly comes as something of a shock, expecting yet another round of western research and gunfighter tales, but our veteran subscribers have had a few years to warm to the idea.

The past few years we've dedicated the October issue to the likes of giant lake monsters, Custer battlefield ghosts, cannibalism, strange flying objects, and maniac hermits. This issue we'll take a look at a strange little man who feasted on the blood of range cattle, a murdered ship captain who wouldn't rest, a grisly ceremony to rid the world of witches, and just enough plain weirdness to keep the light bulbs burning all night long.

Strange tales and public fascination with the unexplained is nothing new, although our particular tales focus on the nineteenth century West, by necessity. No, it seems readers, viewers, and listeners are seeking out the unusual and unbelievable at near every turn. That air-conditioned refuge of the masses, the movie theater, did its fair share of raising the goose bumps of summer audiences. This year's big screen menu blew the dust off familiar, old haunted house tales ("The Haunting"), large, horrific lake monsters ("Lake Placid"), things that live in the depths of the ocean ("Deep Blue Sea"), and at least one reason you should never go out in the woods alone ("The Blair Witch Project").

Go into any toy store in the country, and it's darn near impossible to walk down the aisle without bumping into a rubberized version of Bigfoot, a Roswell Alien, or the Loch Ness Monster. What was once a healthy fear has become another youthful plaything, much like the UFO toys of the 1950s.

The Unexplained has even crept into academic circles. Cryptozoologists catalog and research previously unknown life forms, the boogeymen and water monsters of the past. Degreed folklorists write papers and wildly popular books on not-so-academic subjects as those ominous Men in Black, South America's Chubacabra (small bat-men that feed on goats), and the infamous Mothman.

Yet, as we have seemed to come to terms with the weird world around us, the folks in the West called it as they saw it, and left us with some tales that defy explanation, even today.

One of my favorites is the tale of the unlucky boot, although the story is more coincidence than science fiction. It seems there was once this Texas cowboy, your typical hard-working type. Now, this old boy had a family and a spread that he worked hard, ranging cattle and horses. One day the cowboy was out running cattle through the mesquite when he died, just keeled over dead in the saddle. The local doctor could find no cause of death, and the matter was forgotten, another hard worker who worked himself to death. Not unusual in the West.

Then, about ten years later, when the eldest of the dead man's sons had reached manhood, his mother called him into the bedroom and presented him with his father's boots, beautiful knee-highs with a Lone Star stitched on the shin. The boy had finally become the head of the house, and he rightly deserved the only thing his father had left to this earth.

As the boy slipped on his father's boots and danced across the plank floor, his happy face turned to one of terror, then froze. He slumped to the floor, dead as Caesar.

Upon close inspection of the boots, the doctor finally discovered what killed the father, and now the son: a rattlesnake fang.

Marcus Huff

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What, No Billy & Wyatt??

The July 1999 issue of *True West* was a real "shocker.," not one article or comment connected with Billy the Kid or Wyatt Earp. Could hardly believe my eyes. Maybe they can rest in peace for a month or so.

At least everyone agrees Davy Crockett died at the Alamo. Of course how, when, and exactly where is another question. He has the benefit of being just about everyone's hero, while poor old Custer gets bashed from both sides.

Even DNA doesn't mean a thing in these controversies, depending on which side you're on—it's either "absolute proof" or "the tests were flawed." —*Ivan Pfalser, Caney, Kansas.*

Just wanted you to know how much I love your magazine. I bought it for the first time when I read about Wyatt Earp in New Mexico [*True West*, May 1999]. I am a big fan of Wyatt Earp and I'm always looking for anything I can find on him. I wish you had Wyatt t-shirts.—*Patricia Connerly, West Chester, Pennsylvania.*

Wreck and Ruin

I read every issue of *True West* and *Old West* from cover to cover. I just finished the July 1999 issue and was intrigued with several articles, but I wish to address only "Wreck and Ruin on the Katy" by Nancy M. Peterson. I found the story interesting from start to finish. The research and writing was first rate and the wry humor delicious. Keep up the good work.—*Captain Anthony E. Leopard, Rock Hill, South Carolina.*

We Paid Them to Say It...

Lots of great stuff in the recent mags (never could bring myself to call them "rags" as ol' Hosstail did), not the least of which was Fred Nolan's piece on the Shedd ranch [*True West*, June 1999]. Lee Edwards came up with pure paydirt on his Matt Burts article [*True West*, August 1999]. That sure doesn't look like any Billy Stiles photo I have ever seen; I'll have to grill him on that. But, that's what makes this business fun.—*William Secrest, Fresno, California.*

Another masterful job on the Alamo issue [*True West*, July 1999]. Well done indeed. It is easy to see why *True West* has survived while other mags just floundered and went away.—*Dave Johnson, Zionsville, Indiana.*

I used to buy both *True West* and *Old West* from the local drugstore when I was in elementary and middle school, always fascinated by tales of the West. I just wanted to say that ya'll do a great job, write wonderful stories, depict the great West amazingly, and just plain tell stories that need telling. I hope ya'll never stop making 'em. I'll always love ya'll's work!—*BAWINTEXAS@aol.com*

Editor's Note: Now, I can't just sit here and let you out-ya'll me? I see your last "ya'll" and raise ya 'nother!

SADDLE PALS **By Graham Ward**

SO WHAT IF TH' BOSS SHORTED YOU A DOLLAR LAST TIME? PAY DAY BEFORE THAT, HE OVERPAID YOU A DOLLAR... YOU DIDN'T COMPLAIN ABOUT THAT MISTAKE!
A MISTAKE EVER NOW AN' THEN I CAN OVERLOOK, BUT NOT TWO IN A ROW!

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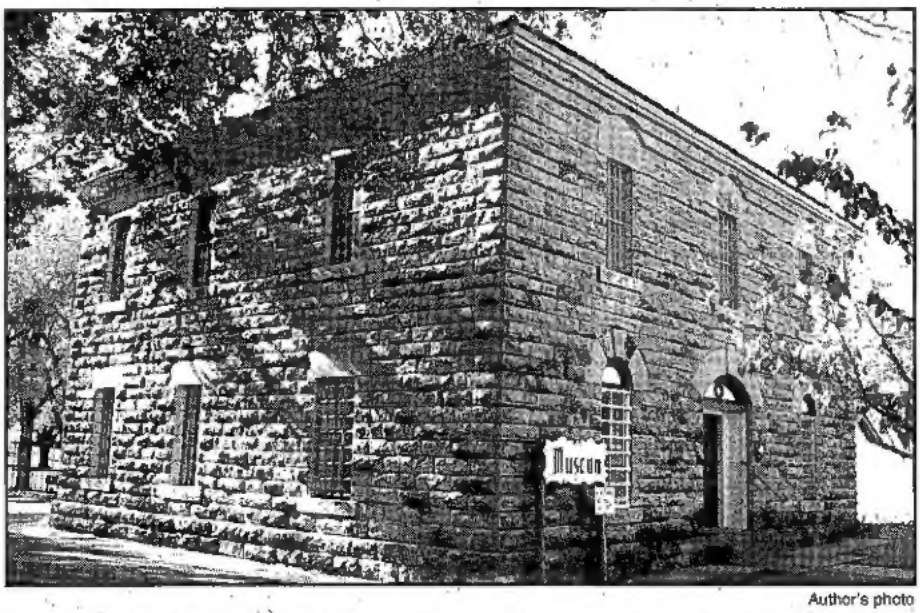
Mobeetie Jail Museum

By Johnny D. Boggs



Author's photo

The Mobeetie Jail Museum houses an impressive collection of Texas Panhandle memorabilia.

When a Kansas businessman said he planned to open up shop in Mobeetie, Texas, Dodge City merchant Robert Wright suggested the entrepreneur leave $10 behind. The money would be spent, Wright said, on shipping the businessman's body home after he was killed.

Who could blame Wright? Originally known as Hidetown and later Sweetwater, the "wicked" town near Fort Elliott in the Texas Panhandle had a reputation for violence. It had served buffalo hunters, soldiers and cowboys. In 1876, saloon girl Mollie Brennan was killed in a fight between Bat Masterson and Sergeant Melvin A. King.

The town in Wheeler County is much more peaceful these days, but Mobeetie still honors its past at the Mobeetie Jail Museum. The museum is also the site of the Wheeler County Heritage Day. The annual event, which typically draws an estimated 500 to 600 spectators each June, features living history exhibits of the 1800s.

The museum and heritage day are products of the Old Mobeetie Association, which has promoted awareness and involvement in Wheeler County's history since 1972.

The museum is located in the jail, which was built of native limestone in 1885-86 and included a hanging device inside. Other buildings on the grounds include a post office, a rock school dating from 1882, and the Masonic Lodge built in 1910. On display are artifacts and documents from Hidetown, including buffalo skinning tools, firearms, and camp equipment; Fort Elliott, including the bell and original flagpole made from two cedar trees in 1879; and Sweetwater and Old Mobeetie, including farming and ranching exhibits and photographs of early businesses.

Located on the jail's first floor are exhibits of the sheriff's living quarters and photos of all of Wheeler County sheriffs and of

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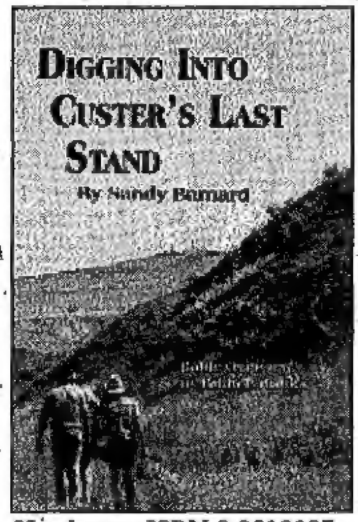
Digging Into Custer's Last Stand

By Sandy Barnard



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Temple Lea Houston, Sam Houston's son and Wheeler County's second district prosecuting attorney and a state senator. On the second floor are the Hidetown and Fort Elliott exhibits. No original buildings of the fort, which was established in 1875 and abandoned in 1890, remain.

Nearby is the Panhandle's oldest cemetery, where Mollie Brennan and Louise Houston, Temple Houston's infant daughter, are buried.

The museum grounds include a campground and a covered pavilion.

The Mobeetie Jail Museum, located off Texas Highway 152 about eleven miles west of Wheeler, is open 1-5 PM daily except Wednesday. Admission is free, but donations are accepted. For more information write Old Mobeetie Association, PO Box 66, Mobeetie, TX 79061, or call (806) 845-2353 or (806) 826-2028.

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Fall Calendar of Events:

Gunfight at the O.K. Corral. Autry Museum of Western Heritage, September 5, 2 PM. Special showing of 1957 film featuring Burt Lancaster as Wyatt Earp, and Kirk Douglas as Doc Holliday. Paul Hutton, professor of history at the University of New Mexico and executive director of the Western History Association, will speak prior to the film. Admission is $5 with paid museum admission. For more information, contact the Autry Museum of Western Heritage, 4700 Heritage Way, Los Angeles, CA 90027. Call (323) 667-2000.

Fort Union Living History Weekend. Williston, North Dakota, September 4-6. Reenactors portray American Fur Company employees and Native Americans at the historic Fort Union Trading Post. Admission is free. For more information, contact

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Fort Union National Historic Site, 15550 Hwy. 1804, Williston, ND 58801.

Fort Osage Rendezvous. Sibley, Missouri, September 10-11. Historic reeanactments and programs at an original 1754 frontier fort, located on the Kennebec River. Contact Historic Fort Osage, 105 Osage Street, Sibley, MO 64088 or call (816) 650-5737 for more information.

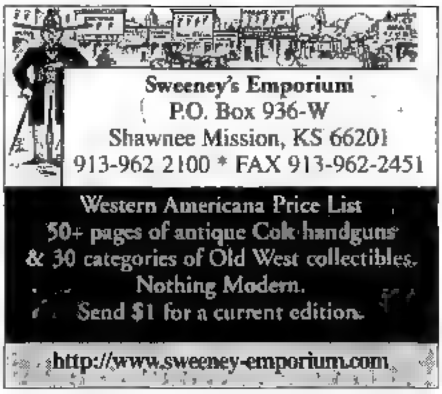
Prosperity Junction Grand Opening. Oklahoma City, September 10-12. The National Cowboy Hall of Fame debuts a new wing, a western village with a focus on frontier life and cowboy artifacts. For more information call (405) 478-2250.

Dalton Days. Longview, Texas, September 25-27. Come relive the excitement and witness history with the Gregg County Historical Museum's production of Dalton Days. Contact the Longview Convention Bureau at (903) 753-3281 for more information.

American Indian Heritage Weekend. Fort Scott, Kansas, September 25-26. Fort Scott National Historic Site plays host to Native American dances, programs, and campfire discussions. Contact Fort Scott National Historic Site, PO Box 918, Fort Scott, KS 66701 or call (316) 223-0310 for more information.

Oklahoma International Bluegrass Festival. Guthrie, Oklahoma, September 30-October 2. Second annual music festival in the historic territorial capital of Oklahoma, featuring Byron Berline and the Red Dirt Rangers. Contact O.I.B.F., PO Box 1585, Guthrie, OK 73044. Call (405) 282-4446 for camping information.

Western Roundup is a report on places to go and things to see associated with the history of the Old West. Submissions are welcome. Send information including photos to: Western Roundup, Western Publications, P.O. Box 2107, Stillwater, OK 74076.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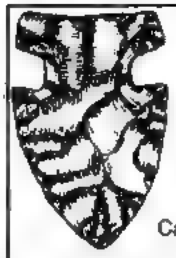
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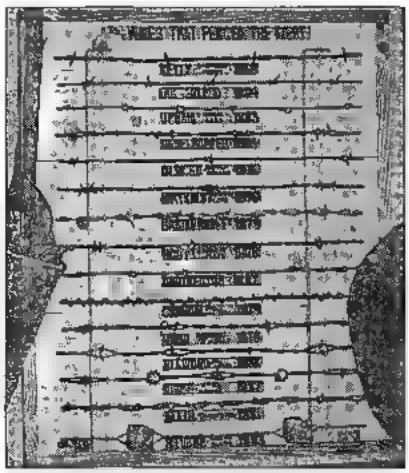
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By Harold

On November 27, 1896, the *San Francisco Morning Call* published a short but eye-catching account about a murder on the San Francisco-based United States ship *Occidental* while the sailing vessel was at sea. The incident, according to the report, occurred in 1887, and since that year the murder victim's ghost haunted the *Occidental*'s forward deck wherever the ship was located on successive Thanksgiving days. Ghost ships were, and are, intriguing subjects for legends and stories, and the *Occidental* is no exception:

> San Francisco Morning Call
> November 27, 1896
>
> WAS MURDERED
> MANY YEARS AGO
>
> It Took Place in the American
> Ship Occidental
>
> Captain Williams was the Victim
> of a Sailor's Vengence
>
> Now the Crew Asserts that his
> Ghost Haunts the Ship
> Thanksgiving Day
>
> There is a haunted vessel in Oakland Creek. The watchman asserts the ghost is harmless, but those who have been on the vessel for several trips say the "spook" comes along as regularly as Thanksgiving.
>
> Some years ago the vessel was in Honolulu, and at that time the *Hawaiian Star* said: "The men in the forecastle see the ghost of Captain Williams frequently. Off Molokai the night before the Occidental was towed to the Pacific Mail dock there was a commotion forward. The man on watch and two others who hurried above when he called declare they saw the captain on deck. They gave a perfect description of the dead man. They say he looked ahead intently for several seconds, turned as if to give orders, uttered a short agonizing groan, staggered amidships and disappeared. Every man forward corroborates this account."
>
> Captain Williams is the restless spirit and he was murdered on the forward deck of the Occidental nearly nine years ago. The vessel was on her way from Liverpool to a South American port with a mixed crew. There was trouble almost from the start and the captain had to be constantly on watch.
>
> One moonlight night when everyone was below, or supposed to be, Captain Williams went forward to see if everything was snug for the night. One of the men who thought he had been abused thrust a knife into his back as the captain turned to go forward. The blade pierced his heart, and Williams, after casting an agonizing glance around, dropped dead.
>
> His murderer is now serving a life sentence in San Quentin. He and some of his accomplices were turned over to the American Consul at Callao and sent to San Francisco. Their trial resulted in the acquittal of all except the man who is now in state prison.
>
> In spite of the ghost the Occidental has been one of the most successful vessels trading in and out of the Golden Gate. Latterly, there have been no charters in sight and she has been tied up in Oakland Creek.
>
> Watchmen pooh-pooh the idea of a ghost, but nevertheless those who know assert that about Thanksgiving time the ghost of Captain Williams appears on the forward deck and the scene of the killing is again enacted.
>
> The Occidental is one of the stanchest [sic] vessels in the American Marine. She has been for years on the coast. Many of the old pilots and sea captains remember Captain Williams as one of the brightest and best of the old-time skippers.

Often newspapers of that day published fiction stories, much like the one above, to amuse their readers. But this story appeared to be based on a true incident, especially since the *Occidental* still existed and was currently tied in Oakland

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OENTALS

G DAY GHOST

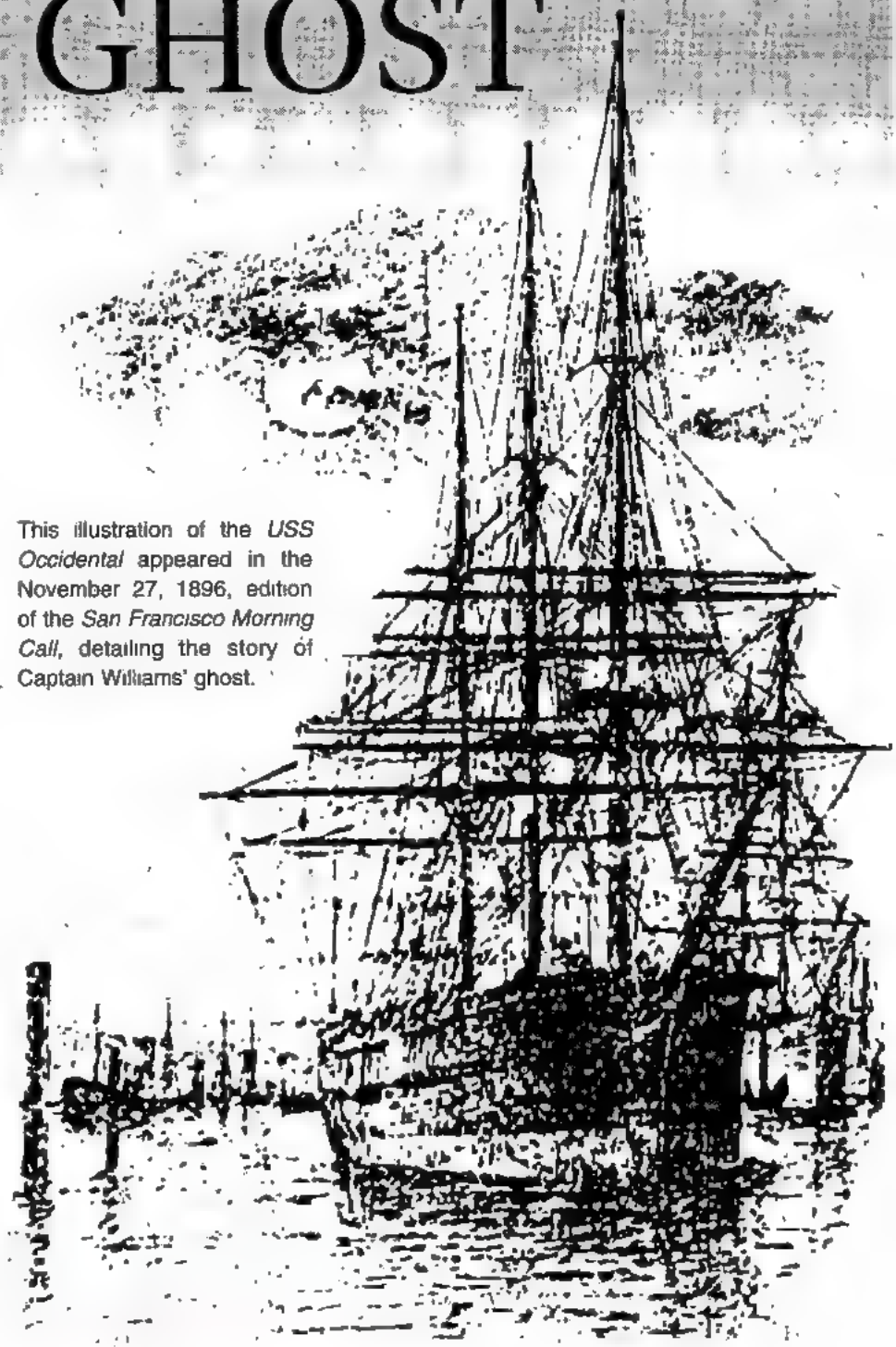
. Edwards

Creek. Further investigation of the reported incident, if indeed it had occurred, appeared to be in order.

It was discovered Captain Williams and the *Occidental* did exist, and according to the dispatches of James Romeyn, United States consul at the port of Valparaiso in Chile, Captain Williams was murdered on board the *Occidental* while it was at sea.

Both Captain Williams and the *Occidental* were originally from Bath, Maine; however, for many years the ship and its captain plied the seas from San Francisco in California, its home port. Captain Williams was no doubt a successful seafarer, as was reported in the *San Francisco Morning Call* of November 27, 1896. He may have been "one of the brightest and best of the old-time skippers," but he had a rough side that was beautifully illustrated by an incident that involved him and the *Occidental* in 1886.

The *Occidental* left Liverpool, England, with a cargo bound for San Francisco. At the time of departure, an English contract pilot, named H. Peletier was on board to guide the ship south through the Irish Sea to the open Atlantic Ocean, beyond Cape Clear on the southern tip of Ireland. When the ship was about seventy miles short of Cape Clear, Peletier asked Captain Williams if his services to



This illustration of the *USS Occidental* appeared in the November 27, 1896, edition of the *San Francisco Morning Call*, detailing the story of Captain Williams' ghost.

the ship could be terminated as he had an opportunity to leave the ship. Two fishing boats were nearby that would transport the pilot from the *Occidental* to shore. At the moment, the winds were favorable for the transfer of the pilot from the ship and Peletier wanted to take advantage of the situation.

To Peletier's surprise, Captain Williams responded, "You are a son of a bitch, and like the rest of the Liverpool pilots! You made a contract to go to Cape Clear, and I can carry you all over the world on the strength of my contract." The pilot argued and again stated the advantages of his leaving the ship at that moment. The shipmaster still refused his request, saying, "I will be in port on the 12th, so you can attend early mass on Sunday morning. If I carry this breeze I will be at Cape Clear at an early hour. I shant stop for you or any other man."

Peletier later claimed that by going to Cape Clear the captain took an unnecessary and circuitous route. In any event, as the *Occidental* passed Fastnet light, off of Cape Clear, the captain called Peletier and said the wind had shifted and no boats were in sight; consequently, the shipmaster was going forward on his course.

Peletier begged the captain to run the ship between Cape Clear and Fastnet Point to give the pilot a chance to leave the ship. The captain refused, and with sails set before a fair wind Captain Williams ordered the man at the steering wheel to change the ship's course for the open sea.

Captain Williams addressed Peletier: "I hold a contract which you signed, and under that contract I can carry you all over the world, but I shall put you on the first home-bound ship or land you at Madiera." (Madiera is an island off the coast of Morroco, Africa.) The pilot pleaded with the captain to let him off of the ship, emphasizing the need his wife and children had for him.

Captain Williams remained unmoved and Peletier remained on board.

The next day, while a gale was blowing, the *Occidental* met another sailing vessel that appeared to be bound for Liverpool. Captain Williams asked Peletier if he would board the approaching ship. Peletier refused to go in the small boat that would transfer him to the approaching ship as the sea was too rough for safe transit. The *Occidental* continued on its way with the pilot still on board. When the ship passed Madiera, Captain Williams refused to land the pilot on the island, and Peletier got a free ride to San Francisco, where he was left stranded.

In late 1886, the *Occidental* made a trip to England, and on February 1, 1887, the ship embarked from Cardiff, Wales, with a cargo of coal for Acapulco, Mexico. On March 16, 1887, while the ship was in the Atlantic Ocean off of the coast of Brazil, Captain Williams was on the ship's forward deck supervising the sailors working on deck and aloft in the ship's rigging. Williams and one of the crewmen, Able-Bodied Seaman John Johnson, exchanged angry words. The captain accused Johnson of insolent conduct and of slovenly approaches to his work.

A few minutes later, while Captain Williams was standing on the forward deck and gazing aloft, Johnson drew his sheath knife and stabbed the shipmaster in the left breast. The knife blade penetrated the captain's heart and John Williams died within minutes.

John Craine, the *Occidental*'s first mate, attempted to arrest Johnson, but was stopped when Edward O'Malley, an able-bodied seaman, drew his knife and prevented him from making the arrest. John Craine, supported by Second Mate Gerald Hogan, tried to sail the vessel on to Acapulco, Mexico. The ship's crew remained sullen and rebellious, and by June 11, 1887, it was apparent to Craine he could go no farther with the mutinous crew. Craine had received threats of personal violence against him from some crew members, and on June 14, 1887, he anchored the *Occidental* in the port of Valparaiso, Chile, South America.

Craine immediately notified the captain of the port about the conditions aboard the *Occidental*, and he asked the port authority to place guards on the ship to prevent the crew from escaping. The mate's request was honored by port officials, and in a short time, United States Consul James W. Romeyn boarded the *Occidental* to investigate matters.

The homicide of Captain Williams was freely admitted by Seaman Johnson, but he attempted to justify the killing by claiming Captain Williams' had been violent and abusive. Consul Romeyn also took written depositions from Alice Williams, Captain Williams' widow who had been on the trip with him; Second Mate Gerald Hogan; and Thomas Paulsen, Richard Blasik, and Albert Field, all able-bodied seamen and witnesses to the murder. The depositions were sworn before Consul Romeyn on June 16. Hogan and Field were considered the principal witnesses. Consul Romeyn clearly believed the murder of Captain Williams and the events following his death demanded the prisoner and the witnesses be transported to the United States for trial. As a consequence, he requested local Chilean authorities to detain Johnson for murder and the witnesses pending their transportation to the United States. His request was honored, and Johnson and the witnesses were confined in jail.

The *Occidental*'s boatswain, August Beular, and Edward O'Malley were also detained by Consul Romeyn as he suspected them of complicity in Captain Williams' murder and of being involved in mutinous conduct. However, on June 24, after an exhaustive inquiry, he released them from jail. He was not convinced of their innocence in the matter but he lacked the crucial evidence needed to convict them in a court trial.

Consul Romeyn solved the *Occidental*'s labor problems by discharging the ship's crew, who were

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paid off in Valparaiso. He appointed First Mate John Craine as the ship's captain and within a few days a new crew was recruited. The *Occidental* continued her voyage to Acapulco, Mexico.

In the meantime, Consul Romeyn was paying for the detention of Johnson, Gerald Hogan, and Thomas Paulsen from state department funds. Hoping to economize on his expenditures, he sought quick transportation of the detainees from Valparaiso to San Francisco on a Chilean merchant vessel. He successfully negotiated the cost of their passage; however, at the last moment a complication arose. He was advised by the Chilean government that no extradition treaty was in force with the United States and when the Chilean ship transporting the prisoner reached international waters the prisoner could possibly be free. This wasn't what Consul Romeyn had in mind, and he canceled negotiations for the trip.

He consulted W.R. Roberts, the United States minister to Chile, on the matter and was advised that expenditures were secondary and to proceed on the usual course. Consul Romeyn decided to hold the prisoner and the witnesses until a more favorable opportunity availed itself for their proper transportation to San Francisco.

A few days later Consul Romeyn's desired opportunity arrived in the form of the U.S. Navy's steam-driven ship, *Thetis*, which had put into Valparaiso, probably for a coal stop. Since the ship was bound for San Francisco, via Callao, Peru, arrangements were made with the ship's captain to transport the prisoner and witnesses to San Francisco. The state department would pay the navy for the passengers' clothing, bedding, food, and other necessary expenses, a total of $203.39.

On October 18, 1887, the *Thetis* docked in San Francisco and Johnson and the witnesses were placed in charge of the U.S. marshal, who lodged them in the San Francisco jail. After a grand jury found a true bill against Johnson for murder, he appeared before the Federal District Court in San Francisco on December 16, 1887, for arraignment. He pleaded not guilty to the charge of murder and his trial was set for January 18, 1888.

During the January court appearance, Johnson's attorney, H.A. Donnelly, asked for a continuance into March in order that he could locate defense witnesses. Attorney Donnelly claimed Johnson had killed Captain Williams in self-defense and he needed Edward O'Malley, Thomas Paulsen, and James Hickey, the ship's carpenter, as witnesses to support his case.

The United States attorney asked if efforts had been made to secure these witnesses after the indictment had been filed sixty days before. Attorney Donnelly answered he had made every effort to locate the witnesses. He reported James Hickey to be residing in Port Townsend, Washington, and working as a carpenter. He would be available for the trial. The whereabouts of O'Malley and Paulsen were at the moment unknown. The case was continued into April 1888. In the meantime, Johnson, Hogan, and Field were held at the federal facility on Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay.

John Johnson's trial was held during the last week of April 1888. The trial was hard-fought by the opposing lawyers. Attorney Donnelly said Captain Williams attacked his client with an iron marlinespike, a tool tapered to a point and used to pry apart rope strands for splicing. At the same time, according to Attorney Donnelly, Captain Williams tried to cut Johnson with a knife.

Apparently Attorney Donnelly was successful in creating reasonable doubt that Captain Williams was murdered. After the presentation of evidence and the jury instructions from the judge, the jury was out all day trying to reach a verdict. On the first ballot eight jurors were for manslaughter, three for murder, and one for acquittal. Several ballots followed with eleven members for manslaughter and one for acquittal. Finally, the jury convicted Johnson of manslaughter and the case was continued to May 8, 1888, for sentence. On May 8, Johnson was sentenced to ten years at California's Folsom prison and was fined $1,000.

John Johnson arrived at Folsom prison on May 10, 1888. He entered the institution as federal prisoner #1629 to serve ten years for manslaughter. He was thirty years of age at the time. He was a small man, 5' 4-3/4" tall. He had a fair complexion, dark hair, and gray eyes. He was born in England, and his occupation was listed as "Sailor." He seems to have been a model prisoner, and he was released from Folsom on December 10, 1894. After his release, he quickly became lost to history.

The *Occidental* sailed from San Francisco for many years after the murder of Captain Williams, and it was free of publicity until the article about Captain Williams' ghost haunting the ship appeared in the *San Francisco Morning Call* in 1896. It is not known how long the old sailing ship traveled the oceans after the article was published, and, in addition, its ultimate fate is not known. Romantics can believe the ship was lost at sea with all hands during a hurricane, or it was shipwrecked on some exotic rocky shore. More likely, however, it was decommissioned and junked, or perhaps it was abandoned and left to rot in one of the backwaters of San Francisco Bay.

With the demise of the *Occidental*, the scene of Captain Williams' murder disappeared and there was no place for Captain Williams' ghost to haunt, ending the ghostly drama with only one question remaining: Since Captain Williams' murder occurred on March 16, why did his ghost haunt the *Occidental*'s forward deck only on successive Thanksgiving Days? The question has never been answered

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VAMPIRE OF THE CATTLE RANGE

Two years before Bram Stoker published his classic horror novel, *Dracula,* and awakened readers to the terror of the human vampire legend, a story emanating from Pierre, South Dakota, appeared in the American press concerning a "ghastly" creature in human form who stalked the cattle ranges, living off the blood of the animals he killed with his bare hands, and sometimes attacking human beings. The San Francisco *Examiner* carried the story on page one of its November 11, 1895, edition, under the headline, "A VAMPIRE MADMAN ON DAKOTA RANGES."

The cattlemen on the ranges west of Pierre, it seems, were all excitedly talking about the apparition that had first been seen several weeks before. Described as "very tall, nearly naked, his skin bronzed by exposure and his savage face nearly hidden by his long, unkempt hair and beard," the "madman" evidently survived as a vampire, sucking the blood from the cattle he killed. Ranchers were unable to explain how he dispatched the animals without a weapon of any kind.

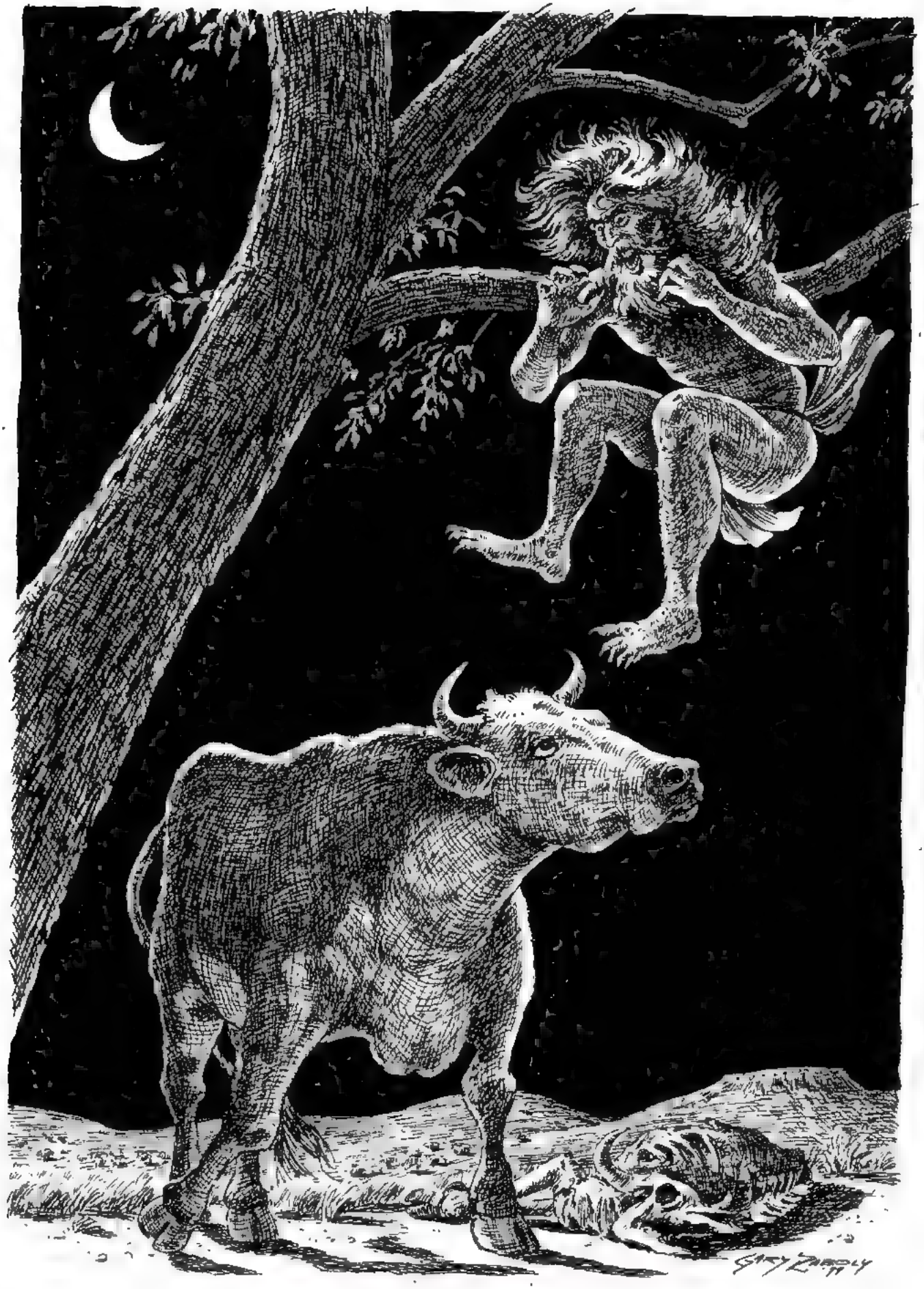
The dead cattle appeared to "have been seized by the heads, borne to the ground by main strength and torn to pieces by the teeth and nails of the lunatic." Repeated attempts to hunt down the stock-killer had met with failure.

Jack Lewis, a cowboy employed on a ranch between Pierre and the Black Hills, experienced the most exciting adventure with the wild man that had been reported. He was dismounted and separated from his companions as darkness fell one evening on the range when he was

> suddenly attacked from behind, hurled to the ground and nearly strangled by the maniac. He struggled furiously, but was unable to reach his weapon, while his assailant frothed at the mouth and made every effort to seize the cowboy by the throat with his teeth.... Such wonderful strength did he display that Lewis was nearly overpowered, and would doubtless have been killed had not his friends, attracted by his cries, arrived in time to rescue him. The madman fled when he saw this reinforcement coming, and, although pursued by several men on fast horses, he contrived to elude them in the dusk and make his escape. Lewis was quite badly torn about the face and neck by the man's teeth and received a shock from which he has not yet fully recovered. Lewis, himself a strong man, says the man's strength and activity are something almost beyond belief, and that no ordinary men would stand a chance in a fight against him, without firearms.

Apparently nothing more appeared in the papers about the Dakota vampire. Perhaps he disappeared, as he had appeared, with the Halloween season.

By R.K. DeArment



In all the tales of the Old West, the legend of the Lost Dutchman Mine is the most enduring, and one of the few "lost gold mine" stories that has a bases in fact.

Much of the legend is based on a misleading article first published by Tom Weedin in his newspaper, the *Florence* (Arizona) *Enterprise*, in 1910. Unfortunately, most of Weedin's article is fiction, mixed with a sprinkling of half-truths twisted and stretched to make the story more intriguing. To find the truth behind the legend, it's necessary to dig further into the past, to the events behind the mine's discovery.

One of the main issues that clouds the Lost Dutchman legend is Weedin's blending of historical fact with a hoax that took place in Arizona at the same time. This has confused and confounded many a teller of the Dutchman tale and it is necessary to explain it in detail for it to be understood.

Author's Collection

Jacob Waltz, age forty-two. This illustration, probably based on a long-lost photo, first appeared in *Gleason's Pictorial* on March 27, 1852.

THE LEGEND OF THE LOST DUTCHMAN

By J. Bernard Stolz

Illustrated by Al Martin Napoletano

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The Great Peralta Land Grant Hoax

One prevalent factor in the Lost Dutchman legend is that the area in which the mine sits, actually some 3,750 square miles of what is now Arizona, was part of a land grant to a Mexican nobleman, Don Miguel Peralta, by King Ferdinand V of Spain in 1748. This land grant, however, was exposed as a elaborate hoax, having nothing to do with the Lost Dutchman Mine, or Jacob Waltz, and was detailed by Clarence Buddington Kelland in 1947 in an article in the *Saturday Evening Post*.

The Spanish-Mexican Peralta family was a large one, with numerous members living in California and Arizona. It's documented that in 1865, one Miguel Peralta, and his brother, Jesus, opened a store in the town of Wickenburg, Arizona, near the Vulture Mine discovered by Henry Wickenburg. At Black Canyon, southeast of the territorial capital of Prescott, there were other Peraltas, the head of that clan being another Miguel Peralta, an elderly man, given the honorary title of Don by his fellow Mexicans. And there were still other Miguel Peraltas, among them Don Peralta's son; all keep turning up in confusing fashion.

It was the elderly Don Miguel Peralta who claimed to be the owner of the grant given him by the Mexican government prior to the Gadsden Purchase, and had documents, including a cedula on parchment, to substantiate his title to an unknown number of acres of Arizona land. Under the arrangement entered into between the United States and Mexico to honor authentic grants of land, it was undoubtedly valuable, but nothing on the scale of what was about to come.

George M. Willing, Jr., familiarly known as Doc Willing, whose only visible means of support was buying and selling mining claims, appeared in Black Rock one day, and immediately sought out Don Miguel. After Willing had satisfied himself that Don Miguel's land grant was indeed genuine, a deal was struck and the grant was purchased for three hundred dollars, the papers being signed over by both Don Miguel and his son.

The front money was supplied by James Addison Reavis, of St. Louis, Missouri, who had conceived the hoax in his real estate office in St. Louis, in 1872. The great Peralta Land Grant swindle that followed was to bedevil Arizona Territory for the next twenty years, and all but succeed.

Reavis was a prosperous real estate agent, owning several farms, city property, and a thousand feet of valuable river frontage in St. Louis. The exact details of the agreement between Willing and Reavis will never be known, other than the fact that Reavis agreed to go to Mexico and settle some debts Willing had contracted in California. After purchasing the original grant, Willing returned to Prescott, Reavis agreeing to join him there a few weeks later.

It was a closely guarded, covert operation for ten years, in the course of which hundreds of ancient documents were forged. Others that reposed in the archives of Guadalajara, Mexico, and Mexico City were surreptitiously altered, listing counterfeit family histories of the mythical Peraltas.

The extent of the land grant took on astronomical proportions. It was extended to include Phoenix inside its west boundary; and eastward, past the imaginary line that divides today's Arizona from New Mexico, just missing Silver City, in New Mexico, and the famous Santa Rita copper mines. To the south, it ran in a straight line to about twenty-five miles north of Tucson. It was seventy miles from that imaginary line to its northern confines, including not only the Superstition Mountains, but also the towns of Phoenix, Maricopa, Casa Grande, Mesa, Florence, Safford, Globe, Clifton, and a dozen other towns or camps. Through it flowed the Gila River, precious beyond price in a parched land where water spelled the difference between life and death. Included along with the Gila was the greater part of the Salt River Valley and the marvelously rich Silver King Mine, which already had produced better than twenty million dollars in ore.

There was a dual purpose to the hoax: if the federal government recognized the validity of the grant, not only would Reavis and Willing acquire a huge amount of valuable land, but no one occupying land within its borders would have title to it until they bought a quitclaim deed from the "Peralta Land and Development Company" owned by Reavis, with Willing acting as his front man. The people living in the region saw themselves in a "damned if you do, damned if you don't" situation.

Interestingly, Prescott was not involved geographically, but the members of the town cast their lot with their fellow Arizonans. They didn't like what they were hearing, and they openly warned Willing that if he went through with his scheme to seize the homes and ranches of their friends he'd be given a good, old- fashioned necktie party. Ignoring the threats, Willing went to the Yavapai County courthouse in Prescott and recorded a deed conveying "a certain grant of land from a Miguel Peralta."

The following morning he was found at the lodging house of R.E. Elliott lying face down on his bed—dead!

Commenting on Willing's demise, the *Prescott Miner* speculated that his death had been "brought on by exposure and privation." The populace of Prescott happily accepted the conclusion and Willing was quickly buried, his passing just as quickly forgotten.

Reavis reached San Francisco by boat from Mexico, and there learned of his partner's death. He immediately contacted Mary Ann Willing, Doc's widow, now living in near poverty, and offered her thirty thousand dollars for her late husband's estate. She eagerly assented. As evidence of Reavis' character, there is no record of Mary ever receiving anything more than his initial down payment of three hun-

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dred dollars.

Reavis was now the sole owner of the Peralta grant, but the only actual evidence he had of its existence was the deed that Doc Willing had recorded in Yavapai County before his death. Willing also had all the carefully manufactured "documents" that Reavis had put together at the time of his death, and that were now stored in Judge Henry W. Fleury's attic in Prescott.

But Reavis was in poor health, not to mention low on funds. He stayed in California, teaching school in Downey, in 1875 and 1876. After this he drifted to the northern part of the state, where he tried his hand at journalism, working as a correspondent for the San Francisco *Examiner* and for the San Francisco *Call*, all the time gathering evidence, or purported evidence, to substantiate the colossal hoax that he was about undertake.

Unaccountably, his fortunes suddenly changed in early 1880, which enabled him to begin his travels. In the spring of that year he arrived in Phoenix in style. He took the stage to Prescott at once, and there, in the attic of Judge Fleury's house, where they had been gathering dust for over two years, he found Doc Willing's belongings and the precious "documents."

Reavis remained in Arizona only long enough to finish his task, and then proceeded to Washington, D.C., to "inspect certain papers," he testified later. From Washington he went to Guadalajara, in the state of Jalisco, where, posing as an American journalist, he was given access to the archives. When he was finished there, he journeyed on to Mexico City where, spending money with a free hand, he ingratiated himself with government officials and in return was permitted to examine bundles of ancient royal documents dating back to the time of Philip V of Spain.

When Reavis returned to the United States, he was prepared to prove that the great Peralta grant was originally a gift from the Spanish monarch, Philip V, to Don Miguel Nemecio Silva de Peralta de la Cordoba, the first baron of Arizonac, and from him descended to his son Jesus Miguel Silva de Peralta de Cordoba, the second baron, the date of recognition of the grant being set down as January 3, 1758, fourteen years after the original promulgation of the royal decree.

Down through sons, grandsons, and great-grandsons, Reavis traced the title to his own era and conveniently, not to the Peraltas of Black Canyon. Now thirty-nine, he claimed he had located a direct descendant of the fabled second baron of Arizonac, one beautiful Sophia Loreta Micaela Peralta, a young woman who had not yet celebrated her twentieth birthday. Reavis promptly made her his wife.

Later, Reavis was to go to Spain, where, with the help of the American minister, he was given the freedom of the Royal Archives, into which he inserted more documents to strengthen his case, removed and destroyed others that were damaging.

Now, at last, he was ready to make his bid for empire, and he filed an impressive array of documents with the United States surveyor general of Arizona in Tucson.

Believing the land grant to be valid, James M. Barney, the millionaire owner of the great Silver King Mine, paid Reavis $5,000 for a quitclaim to his property. It sent chills down the spines of the small mine owners and businessmen: if men of the stature of Charlie Crocker, John Mackay, and Jim Barney were convinced that the United States would have to declare the Peralta grant valid, perhaps it was time for lesser men to fall in line.

Not only were figures of great wealth backing Reavis, but he was employing the likes of Robert G. Ingersoll and Roscoe Conkling, some of the most famous lawyers in the country, to protect him from his various schemes, such as the Casa Grande Improvement Company and the Salt River Valley Irrigation Company, all of which existed only on paper. Yet, it's been stated he received anywhere from two hundred thousand to as much as half a million dollars from these con games

The land grant was by now casting a dark and menacing cloud over that part of Arizona lying within its prescribed boundaries, and the only way in which it could be either validated or invalidated was by the lengthy procedures directed in an act of Congress in 1854 for settling the legality of such grants.

It would take fifteen years to accomplish the downfall of James Reavis. His scheme finally began to unravel on June 3, 1895, when he appeared to press his claim in the recently established U.S. Court of Private Land Claims, in Santa Fe, New Mexico, a Chief Justice Reed presiding.

Government experts pointed out that certain alterations to some of the beautifully embellished ancient documents bearing the lead seals of the Spanish crown, which Reavis offered in evidence, could not have been made with a steel pen a century before the steel pen came into use.

On June 26, a week after the trial ended, Chief Justice Reed read the devastating decision. It stated, in part:

"The Court finds...the claim is wholly fictitious and fraudulent and the various documents on which the same is based are each and all of them forged, manufactured, and have been surreptitiously introduced into the records and archives at Madrid and Seville and into the records and archives in the City of Guadalajara...And the Court further finds that no such person as Don Miguel Nemecio Silva de Peralta de la Cordoba ever existed...that the plaintiff Sophia Loreta Peralta and her husband and co-plaintiff James Addison Reavis are not in anywise related to or connected with said alleged grantee...but that they and each of them are fraudulent and fictitious claimants for said property."

"Sophia Loreta" was subsequently revealed not to be a Peralta, or even from Hispanic origins at all, but the illegitimate daughter of an Indian

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woman and one John A. Treadway, of Sherwood Valley, California.

Reavis was placed under arrest, charged with conspiring to defraud the government and after a year of legal wrangling, he was brought to trial. On June 30, 1896, he was found guilty as charged. Two weeks later, he was sentenced to serve two years in a federal penitentiary and fined $5,000.

The Lost Dutchman Legend

Because of Weedin's misleading article, the Peralta land grant has become so interwoven with the legend and folklore of Arizona, that Reavis' mythical Peraltas, not the real ones, color most of the articles written about the Lost Dutchman Mine. However, the Peraltas referred to from hereon were actual living people, residing in Wickenburg and Black Rock, Arizona, at the time.

Gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill, in northern California, in 1849, setting off the first worldwide gold rush. Jacob Waltz, the so-called "Dutchman," came to the United States from Germany sometime in 1850, and immediately migrated west, following the tens of thousands of others to the newly opened goldfields. The earliest known written record of Waltz in this country comes from the Los Angeles census dated July 24, 1860. (A census taken in Sacramento ten years earlier, dated October 27, 1850, lists a J.W. Walls. Some authors are quick to jump on this as a simple misspelling of his name, thus record of his movement; however, I find this a little too wide of a leap to make without a solid foundation.)

On April 12, 1861, as the Civil War erupted at Fort Sumter, the men in the California goldfields continued their insatiable quest for the yellow metal, seemingly oblivious to any and everything outside their immediate interest.

On July 19, 1861, in the federal court for the first district, Los Angeles, Waltz became a naturalized citizen of the United States. This act was not so much out of loyalty to his new country as it was from the common belief among the miners at the time that non-citizens could not legally hold mining claims. In actuality this wasn't true, but it was widely fostered by native born citizens of this country in an attempt to keep immigrants from staking mining claims.

In 1862, Henry Wickenburg, a disillusioned 'Forty-niner, left California and decided to try his luck in the Arizona territories. Riding through the barren countryside, he discovered a large pinnacle of white quartz laced with gold rising from the Arizona desert. This was to become the famous Vulture Mine. Upon news of the discovery, a large number of other prospectors who had failed to become rich in California, Waltz among them, moved to Arizona, seeking another chance at fame and fortune.

The Vulture officially opened in the summer of 1863. By September, Waltz had staked and recorded his own first claim, the Gross Lode, in the Walker District. However, Waltz's claim turned out to be only a small placer deposit, and in short order he found himself in need of employment. Jack Swilling, a former Confederate officer and engineer who operated an arrastra, or grinding mill, processing ore from the Vulture, hired Waltz, and for the next few years he worked in and around Wickenburg's mine.

Waltz continued his own mining attempts on his free time, managing to stake the Big Rebel claim in the Walnut Grove District in Yavapai County on September 14, 1864, and on January 8, 1865, the General Grant. Again, neither is known to have amounted to much.

Steam-powered stamping mills quickly replaced the arrastras, dramatically increasing the processing of ore, and Waltz went to work full time inside the mine. A mile south of the Vulture's two ten-unit stamping mills, the town of Wickenburg gradually rose from a tent city boom town, to an established village with wooden buildings. In 1865 a Mexican named Miguel Peralta, in conjunction with his brother, Jesus, established and built a general merchandise store. One of only two such stores in the area, it was visited by most of the miners from the Vulture, including Waltz. Miguel and Jesus had family connections to an elderly Don Miguel Peralta in Mexico, where the main body of the family resided on their ancestral estate, in the province of Sonora, near the village of Arizpe.

Just months after Miguel's store was established, the unthinkable happened. The Vulture Mining Company had purchased two new twenty-unit stamping mills. Set in place, they were just about to be put into operation when the company suddenly ran out of money due to gross mismanagement of the company's assets. All mining and construction had stopped dead in its tracks by early 1866. The collapse of the company meant total disaster for the town, and for several months, the situation looked bleak. Miners deserted the area, and Wickenburg slowly began its descent into a ghost town. Miguel desperately needed money to keep the business from going under, and leaving Jesus in charge of the store, traveled to the Peraltas' ancestral home in Mexico in the hope of raising some much needed cash.

When the Vulture was closed, Waltz was let go with the main body of the miners, not fired for high-grading (stealing gold ore) as is often recorded. He also sojourned into Mexico looking for a new strike.

Unfortunately, Miguel Peralta found his relatives rich in heritage only. "Don" Miguel (Miguel's father or grandfather) had discovered and worked several rich mining claims in Arizona when the territory was still part of Mexico. On Don Miguel's last trip to the mines he and his expedition were ambushed by Apaches, resulting in the loss of a great number of lives. The fierceness of the attack prompted him to abandon the mines for good and return to his home in Sonora, taking with him what gold the family could carry. This was a disaster for the family in more ways than one. The small amount of gold the sur-

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vivors returned with was only a fraction of that expected and the estate soon began to build debts of its own.

The original discovery of the Peralta mine is shrouded in mystery. Some accounts claim it was first brought to the attention of Jesuit priests by Apache Indians in the late sixteenth century. Old muleshoes and an ancient anvil of Mexican origin were discovered near Weaver's Needle around 1900, and there's evidence that gold in large quantities had been once taken out of the Superstitions, giving some credence to the theory. (The Needle, a prominent rocky formation named for Pauline Weaver, a mountain man and the first known white man to discover gold in the region, has been the central focus of the Lost Dutchman legend, with many believing the mine lay within sight of it.)

Peralta and Waltz would have a chance meeting in a small cantina that would change the German's life forever. As the story goes, while playing poker, Miguel caught a gambler cheating at cards and called him on it. Just as the large man was about to take on Miguel, Jacob stepped in on Miguel's side and the man backed down. (Other versions claim it was a crooked game of three-card monte.) Afterwards, according to Waltz's personal account, supposedly first related to Julia Thomas by Waltz in 1890 (and from a Prescott newspaper, *The Prospect*, in an article published in 1892, shortly after Waltz died), in a gesture of appreciation Miguel put forth the proposition of selling a mine to Waltz.

Miguel, as well as the ancestral Peralta estate, needed immediate cash to stay solvent, and the shop owner had no desire to chance a trip to the dangerous Apache Indian territories. He knew Waltz from the store, and offered the miner the deal of a lifetime: if Waltz would make a trip to the mine and retrieve all the worked gold hidden in several caches for the Peraltas, whatever gold that still laid within

Author's Collection

Jacob Waltz, guns in hand, saves Peralta (bending over to his left) from a card sharp. This version of events is highly romanticized, there being no record of Waltz owning any weapon other than a double-barreled shotgun.

...their rifle shots had attracted the attention of Apaches, and before they could get away, they were attacked. In the running skirmish that followed, the two men became separated.

the mine itself would be his. Waltz agreed and was provided with a detailed description of the trails and countryside leading to the mine. Interestingly, Waltz never personally mentioned a map of any kind. The information he was given was strictly verbal, and for an experienced desert rat like himself, perfectly adequate.

Waltz carried out this first trip alone with a few pack horses, making an uneventful trip in and out of the Superstitions without being seen by the Apaches and returned, so it's claimed, with about $60,000 worth of gold.

Meanwhile, the Vulture Mine, and subsequently the town of Wickenburg, along with Miguel's store's business, were brought back to life by Michael Goldwater and businessman Bernard Cohn with a loan totaling about $35,000. The mills were finished and up and running in November 1866. (By 1880, a total of eighty stamping mills operated around the clock, processing two hundred tons of ore and producing four thousand dollars in gold a day.)

To actually work his new mine, Waltz realized he needed a partner. His choice was Jacob Weiser, a carpenter in Florence, Arizona, who is said to have made him one or two dry-washers sometime between 1867 and 1870. Whether Waltz and Weiser had a long-time association before this, or if this was a judgment decision by Waltz, is an unresolved question.

Waltz and Weiser reached the southern edge of the Superstitions in the spring of 1871 on their first trip to the mine together. According to Waltz's personal account, they "proceeded up the first long draw leading to the interior and soon found [Don Miguel's] marked trail which led over the top of the main mountain and down a long ridge past a sombrero-like butte into a deep, brush covered canyon. From there, the trail wound through a small boulder strewn arroyo, eventually ending at the site of the mine."

As the two Jacobs closed in on the site, they heard the sound of someone breaking rocks at the diggings. Spotting what appeared to be three Apaches pounding and sorting ore, Waltz and Weiser immediately opened fire, killing all three men. Upon closer inspection, however, they discovered the men were actually Mexican laborers of Don Miguel's. The men, members of a previous expedition, had slipped away from the ranch in Sonora and had come to the site to mine gold for themselves. Disturbed by their err in judgment, Waltz and Weiser buried the men, then gathered up the sizable quantity of gold worked by them and started to make their way out of the mountains.

But their rifle shots had attracted the attention of Apaches, and before they could get away, they were attacked. In the running skirmish that followed, the two men became separated. Weiser, Waltz believed, was attempting to make his way toward the friendly Pima Indian villages, but he was never to be heard from again.

Waltz, managing to survive unscathed, returned to Florence alone and immediately began to experience problems. When questioned about Weiser's absence, he related his story. Some of the townspeople didn't believe his version of events and there began a controversy as to the actual facts concerning the carpenter's disappearance. Many of the townspeople suspected, and openly suggested, that Waltz had simply done Weiser in to keep all of the gold for himself. After a few months, the situation became so intense that Waltz began to fear for his life and was forced to leave the area, eventually resettling in Phoenix.

Weiser's body was never recovered, nor is there any record of him surviving the attack. Several stories circulate about Weiser having made it to the Pima village, about him giving a certain judge (or "Doc") Jack Walker a map and how Tom Weedin made a tracing of it. However, these all can be traced back to a single source: Weedin's 1910 article in which he attempted to incorporate himself and Walker into the Lost Dutchman legend. The fact is, the only person who actually knew what happened to Jacob Weiser, was Jacob Waltz. And, truth or lie, he stuck to his story right to the end.

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Waltz was in and out of Phoenix, only staying long enough to squander some of his hard-earned gold at the gaming tables. He quickly became famous for his spending sprees and partying.

For the next couple of years Waltz worked the mine by himself, often disappearing for a month or two at a time. He was sighted on occasion in Tucson, Phoenix, Florence, and Adam's Mill in 1872 and 1873, explaining to those who asked that the gold was from what he called "one of the little caches." Several times he made his way into the Superstitions but was forced to turn back when he discovered that he was being followed.

In 1874 the records of Maricopa County show that he filed on a quarter section of desert land, which a few years later was incorporated into the Phoenix town site. Waltz was in and out of Phoenix, only staying long enough to squander some of his hard-earned gold at the gaming tables. He quickly became famous for his spending sprees and partying. Waltz also liked his beer, and became a regular customer of Luke's Brewery.

But others in Phoenix had known Waltz some ten years earlier when he was employed by Jack Swilling at the Vulture Mine. A rumor started that Waltz was fired for high-grading, and it's been suggested by some that this was the actual source of his "little caches."

In Waltz's defense, high-grading, at least at the Vulture, was a curse from day one, and a practice the mine owners were never able to stop, even under the threat of death. It was something, quite literally, everybody did. The miners, the foremen, the crew leaders, the freighters who transported the ore to stamping mills, all picked up a few choice nuggets on the sly. Even the men operating the stamping mills took an occasional "five-finger discount." Even though death was threatened, most miners flagrantly caught stealing were simply fired on the spot and sent packing without any back pay due them.

The situation was so bad, in fact, that it was estimated that by the time the Vulture closed on December 8, 1941, just as much gold had been high-graded from the mine as was processed through the stamping mills. The practice was almost encouraged by the local merchants through the years, such as Peralta's store, which gladly took gold in payment, no questions asked.

All of Waltz's known ore was made up of different types of quartz. Around 1880, he paid the local shoemaker in Phoenix, Charlie Rodig, with gold in pale yellow quartz for mending his shoes; in 1882, he sold nugget gold in pink, or rose color quartz to one Charlie Meyers, in Tucson, for $1,600 (this is the color quartz supposedly found in the Lost Dutchman mine); in 1883 he traveled to San Francisco to dispose of wire gold in black quartz

he had shipped by express from Tucson; and the ore he would later give to his nurse, Julia Thomas, in 1890, was gold in white quartz.

But Waltz's gold shipments to the federal mints in San Francisco and Philadelphia are also unverifiable incidents in the legend. H. Henry Sheffer, III, in his book *The Missing Link*, claims these shipments were worth "$254,000...by way of Wells Fargo and Company and the old Butterfield stage lines. There are shipping orders and mint vouchers to prove it." However, all records for the San Francisco mint, and Wells, Fargo shipping in that city, prior to 1906 were destroyed in the earthquake and resulting fire that year that literally burned the entire city to the ground. There are no records at the Philadelphia mint listing any shipments of gold or silver from a Jacob Waltz at any time.

An interesting article appeared in the *Arizona Gazette* on June 19, 1884:

> About 10 o'clock a.m. yesterday, word was received that a Mexican by the name of Pedro Ortega had been murdered, at the house of Jacob Waltz, a mile southeast of this city, by a man named Selso Grajalva. The matter was turned over to Justice Richards, who, acting as a corner, summoned a jury and repaired to the scene of the tragedy at 1 o'clock. The Gazette reporter was on hand. He found the body of Ortega lying about thirty feet from the house of Jacob Waltz, his legs, and abdomen from the knees to the breast bone were perforated with "double B" shot, the Femoral artery on the right side being severed and in itself producing death. There was a mystery about the whole affair. Ortega was shot and killed by a shotgun belonging to Jacob Waltz. That gentlemen heard the Mexicans talking loudly, and then the report of the gun. He ran to the side of the house where the tragedy occurred and saw the dying man. The assassin evidently ran around the building in the opposite direction, returned the gun to the room and place whence it had been taken, and then sought flight. Waltz did not know, and so testified at the inquest, that his gun had been the instrument of the crime until Deputy Sheriff Rogers appeared on the scene. The only direct testimony was that of Waltz. The murderer is still at large, although officers are in hot pursuit.

While the story comes off a bit far fetched, especially the part about Selso running around the house and returning Waltz's shotgun, the judge and sheriff evidently took Waltz at his word, for nothing more can be found about the incident. How Selso Grajalva, who owned a 160-acre plot of land adjacent to Waltz's, got possession of the shotgun in the first place, and why Waltz didn't even notice the weapon was missing, is left unexplained.

During that same summer, Waltz decided to get away and started off into the Superstitions alone. This time, three men, Colonel Poston, George McClarty, and Charles Brown, who were determined to discover the mine's location, followed him. The three men returned empty handed and were later forced to admit that Waltz had managed to elude them in the back country of the Superstitions after they had followed him to Whitlow's Ranch on Queen Creek. Waltz returned from the journey with two small pouches of worked gold, the combined amount being worth just a little over $500.

Waltz admitted on his death bed that he never went near his rich quartz mine after 1884. It was his last known excursion to the mine. What's not widely known is that for the last twenty years of his life, according to a statement made by Julia Thomas after his death, Waltz harbored a deep sense of guilt, feeling he was personally responsible for the death of Jacob Weiser. It's quite possible that every journey to the mine brought back memories of that tragic experience. Now in his seventies, he was getting too old to journey alone into the rugged mountains and was dubious about taking on any new companions, the fear of a double-cross always being imminent. Also, the Apache threat, not to mention the growing number of white outlaws, was proving more than a man of his advancing age could handle.

Enter Mrs. Julia Thomas

By 1889, Waltz was seventy-eight or seventy-nine years old and no longer the adventurer. He constructed an adobe on his property in Phoenix, a 160-acre plot of land between present day Seventh and Twelfth streets, respectively, on the west and east, and Buckeye and Henshaw roads on the north and south. He fenced off several acres, planted it with alfalfa, and turned to raising chickens and hogs. Jacob lived partly off of the livestock, partly from the revenue of wine made from the grapes of his orchard, and just before he died, partly from the donations of friends, never spending what was left of his ore.

Selling eggs to a local baker, Mrs. Julia E. Thomas, he gradually became friends with the African American woman (who would eventually serve as his nurse) and her sixteen-year-old foster son, German-born Reinhart "Reinney" Petrasch. Julia came to Phoenix from Colorado City, Texas, in the summer of 1883, with her white husband, Emil W. Thomas. She was in her mid-forties.

To support the family, Julia opened a bakery, located across the street from the Phoenix City Hall, which proved successful enough to eventually partition off the front and add on an ice cream parlor. The bakery needed eggs in quantity, and she gradually became Jacob's best customer. It brought him to her place several times a week and was the beginning of a friendship that lasted for the rest of his life. His relationship with Julia was both kind, and generous, and if there was any type of romantic, or sexual involvement, there's no evidence of it. Some writers, however, with no documentation, have felt it necessary to interject the sordid notion that she became his mistress with

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the sole intention of learning the location of his mine. Julia "intermarried" (according to her divorce papers) Emil Thomas on December 28, 1880. But Emil proved to be a shiftless character who; unknown to Julia, couldn't be bothered with everyday trifles, such as paying the bills. On March 23, 1890, Emil finally deserted Julia and Reinhart, absconding with all the profits from the store. Julia suddenly discovered her creditors were about to seize her business.

Auditors told her "the fixtures and stock" in the store were worth about $300, but the store's outstanding debts were about $500, along with a separate mortgage of another $300.

Waltz, hearing of his friend's plight, gave Julia a number of sealed tin cans containing high-grade ore. Records indicate that in April 1890 she cashed in a quantity of gold in white quartz at Goldman & Co.'s store, in Phoenix, for a total of about $1,500. She stated to the store owners that Jacob told her to come back for more if the present amount wasn't enough.

Then, on the night of February 25, 1891, a bizarre situation took place, especially strange for a desert town like Phoenix. *The Weekly Phoenix Herald* reported:

> Ed Scarbough, Henry King and others started about 9 p.m. with a boat to rescue Count Duppa, H. Tweed, and Jake Starar, at the latter's place southeast of town. They were on the roof but unconcerned, as a levee thrown up around the adobe house rendered it proof against the flood. All three men appeared in town this morning as though nothing had happened. Near their places several adobes, not having been embanked, fell, including those of Beckett, Pesquica, butcher [Selso] Grijalba, Jake Waltz, one belonging to four Swedes, and two Mexican houses back of Starar's.

The Salt River, fed by storms in the mountains, unleashed the most extensive flood damage ever suffered in Phoenix and neighboring Tempe. The heavy rains also caused the collapse of a dam on the Hassayampa River at Walnut Grove, about twenty miles north of Wickenburg, releasing a forty-foot high wall of water that swept downstream taking thirty lives and destroying a number of commercial buildings and homes located on both banks of the river.

Jacob's adobe house crumbled in the similar, though not nearly as high, wake of the Salt River, and most of his personal possessions were swept away in the onslaught of torrential waters. Attempting to rescue his pigs, Waltz became engulfed in the waters, saving himself only by climbing a mesquite tree, where he hung soaked to the skin in the cold night air until rescued by boat the next morning. Shortly afterwards, he developed pneumonia, and with nowhere else to go, was then taken in and nursed by Julia.

Julia, learning her husband was now in Centralia, Washington, subsequently started divorce proceedings against Emil on August 22, 1891, and was granted a final decree on October 6.

Directions to the Lost Dutchman Mine

On October 25, Waltz finally succumbed to the complications of the illness that had gripped him for some eight months. What actually was said in his final hours is up for conjecture, but according to her own account, he told Julia:

> "The mine is in very rough country; so rough, in fact, that you can be right in the mine without seeing it. Some distance above the tunnel, on the side of the mountain, is a shaft or incline, that is not so steep, but one can climb down. Shelves have been cut into the walls of the vertical shaft, and on each shelf, timbers cut with notches, fixed to use as we climbed up carrying our loads. This shaft goes down on an 18 inch vein of quartz that runs several thousand dollars to the ton. This quartz ledge is of the rose-quartz variety with a few inches of crystal hematite and quartz on the hanging wall side.
>
> "The few inches of the hanging wall ore is about one-third gold. The rose-quartz is generously sprinkled with pin head size lumps of gold. The ore is rich and easy to remove from the rock and gold nuggets easily fell out when we tapped the rock with our hammers.
>
> "There is a cave in a secluded spot in which I hid when eluding followers. About a mile from the cave there is a rock resembling a face looking to the east. To the south is a picacho, butte, or sombrero [like] peak. Follow the right of two canyons beyond the peak, but not too far. There's a two-room house in the mouth of a cave on the side of the slope near the gulch. The house is located at the foot of a high bluff, and about a mile and a half from the mine. The mine is near the head of the gulch and on the opposite side from the house. The gulch contains many potholes and runs in a north and south direction.
>
> "Near the head of the gulch is the foundation of an old stone cabin directly opposite the mine. Opposite the foundation of the cabin is a tunnel, well covered up and concealed in the bushes. The mine faces west and at certain times of the year, the setting sun shines through a pass between two high ridges and falls directly on the mine's covered entrance."

According to Julia's own account, sometime during his stay with her, Jacob revealed that a box of gold was still buried under the remains of his ruined adobe, and he wanted her to have it. Reinney unearthed the rotting wooden box and transferred the contents (supposedly forty-eight pounds of gold in white quartz ore) to a clean box and placed it under Waltz's bed, where it remained until his death.

On October 25, Waltz finally succumbed to the complications of the illness that had gripped him for eight months. When Jacob took a turn for the worse, Julia went for the doctor, leaving Dick Holmes, a

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mutual friend, and Giddion Roberts, a local tracker, with Waltz. What the dying man said on his death bed will never be known. The next day, after Jacob's funeral, Julia found the box empty. A lawsuit was filed against Holmes, Julia claiming he stole the gold ore. Holmes, with Roberts as a witness, claimed Jacob had given him the gold just moments before he died. The lawsuit was eventually thrown out of court; the gold was never returned.

In writing his obituary, the October 26, 1891, Phoenix *Herald*, stated:

> Jacob Waltz, aged 81 years, died at 6:00 a.m. Sunday, October 25, 1891, and was buried at ten o'clock this morning from the residence of Mrs. J.E. Thomas, who had kindly nursed him through his last illness. Deceased was a native of Germany and spent the last thirty years of his life in Arizona, mining part of the time, ranching and raising chickens. His honest, amiable, industrious character led Mrs. Thomas to care for him during his final days on earth and he died with a blessing for her on his lips.
>
> Waltz was buried in the [Phoenix] City Cemetery, Block 19, Grave 4.

According to Julia's own account, sometime during his stay with her, Jacob revealed that a box of gold was still buried under the remains of his ruined adobe, and he wanted her to have it.

Why is the mine still lost?

It seems that with such detailed instructions Waltz's mine should have been located almost immediately. However, even if the directions are accurate, they were rendered useless by a natural event long overlooked by searchers—the covering of the mine.

Many writers have sought a way to explain how the mine may have been filled in or camouflaged. In 1930, an Indian, known to the locals as Apache Jack, came forward with his version of the events. He claimed that after chasing away Waltz in 1881, the Apaches decided that the only way to keep the white man out of their territory for good was to obliterate all traces of the mine. Apache Jack, supposedly a boy at the time of the incident, told the story of how he and other children and women of his village were set to work filling in the open pit, while the men shifted around larger rocks on the hillside to disguise the area. In other versions of the mine's covering, it's claimed that Waltz himself filled in the pit, exhausting a year's effort to complete the task.

While the stories may sound plausible on the onset, they defy some basic logic. In the first place, the Apaches had enough to do just scratching out an existence in the

barren and hostile region, much less waste a year moving dirt and rocks around. They would have never pursued such a fruitless venture when it would be easier to simply kill any white men venturing into their territory. As for Waltz doing it himself, taking into account Waltz's age, the amount of work involved, the then antagonistic attitude of the Indians, not to mention the fact that he was known to be in and around Phoenix most of this time, it seems highly improbable he attempted such a lengthy and strenuous venture: Little credence can be given to either the Indian or the Waltz "cover-up" story.

The real answer as to how the mine has eluded its searchers lies in several newspaper articles printed five years before Waltz's death.

Arizona *Weekly Enterprise*, May 3, 1887:

> Pinal, Arizona. At 2:35 p.m., Florence time, we had quite a sharp shock of earthquake here....Large pieces of rock were detached on all sides of Picket Post mountain, which of course rolled to the bottom, raising a cloud of dust, and for several minutes it ascended about the mountain, giving it the appearance of a live volcano....

Los Angeles Times, May 4, 1887:

> The earthquake was very heavy at Ft. McDowell, thirty miles east of this city (Phoenix). A large majority of the population rushed into the streets very much frightened by the strange phenomenon, which has never before visited this section.

Arizona *Journal-Miner*, May 5, 1887:

> Tuesday's earthquake was felt at El Paso, Deming, Tucson, Yuma, Phoenix, and Ft. McDowell. It seemed the heaviest at the latter place.

On this bright, sunny afternoon, Fort McDowell and the once-thriving mining town of Pinal reported that they were suddenly shaken and shattered by furious vibrations as an earthquake shook the Superstitions. From the fort, it was reported that soldiers watched as huge chunks of rock and debris cascaded down the mountain slopes during the brief but violent movement of the earth, sweeping aside everything in their paths. Tons upon tons of rock were strewn over this usually quiet landscape, filling depressions and gorges, shaking buildings off their foundations, and completely changing the topography of the land throughout the mountain range. Within a matter of seconds, the terrain in and around the Superstitions changed dramatically.

Weaver's Needle was given a face lift by the quake, and around its base are tons of loose rock that were at one time part of it. Even a local watering hole was completely covered over. It's quite likely that the open pit mine, the rock resembling a face looking to the east, and the small cave "across from the mine" collapsed and filled in. The concealment of the Lost Dutchman, then, was not the result of intense Apache labor, or long hours of toil by the aged miner. It was done at the snap of mother nature's finger tips.

There's little doubt that Waltz gave Julia his mine, with explicit directions for finding it. But Waltz's description of the landscape was a reflection of the terrain before the 1887 earthquake. (By Waltz's own admission, he hadn't visited the actual mine since 1884.) The quake, which ran in a direct line from Fort McDowell to Pinal, directly through Weaver's Needle, drastically altered the lay of the land to the extent that it renders even an original map (if there was one) totally useless, and valuable today only as a curiosity.

Julia Thomas gives the story of the Lost Dutchman mine its only real solid foundation. By all accounts, Julia was a hard-working individual, and a smart businesswoman. Singly, she had supported herself and her family, and paid off most of the debts incurred by her shiftless ex-husband. This said, shortly after Waltz's death, Mrs. Thomas sold the ice cream parlor and set out with Reinney in search of the mine. It's highly unlikely she would have risked everything she'd worked so hard to attain if she didn't believe there was something out there worth looking for.

On her first trip in search of the mine, which lasted about twenty-five days, she hired two men to assist her. They not only proved to be of little help but also detrimental to her cause in the long run. Upon returning from the unsuccessful venture, the two men undoubtedly told their friends of certain details that Julia had revealed to them, in particular what landmarks to look for. The news spread like wildfire, and within the year, the "secret" information contained in Waltz's death bed instructions was openly printed in local newspapers.

After Julia's funds were exhausted, Reinney's older brother and his uncle, Herman Petrasch, both experienced miners, were summoned from Colorado City, Texas, to look for the mine. In the mountains in the summer of 1892, the two men found and identified a trench on the Black Queen claim at Goldfield as having been dug by Waltz. It was the first mark on the trail to the mine, but this would be their only substantial discovery.

In 1894, a prospector by the name of P.C. Bicknell discovered the house in the mouth of the cave, and for a time, the search for the mine was concentrated in this area. Jim Bark, and another rancher, Huse Ward, personally spent several years and over $1,500 scouring the area. Bark is commonly credited with tagging the mine with its now famous title around 1894, after the seemingly endless number of people passing his ranch kept asking him if he knew the directions to the "Lost" Dutchman's mine.

In 1910, Bark discovered evidence on an apron of volcanic tufa that stretches out from the western wall of the Superstitions, some three miles east of the old mining camp of Goldfield, that a ferocious battle between the Mexicans and Apaches, lasting several days, had occurred,

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validating at least part of Miguel Peralta's story.

Curiously, after this discovery was made known, Tom Weedin came forth with a story about how Jacob Weiser survived the 1871 Apache attack, gave a map to one Dr. Walker, and printed his article about the Lost Dutchman mine, tying it to the ubiquitous Peralta land grant.

My research, however, suggests the now famous site of Weaver's Needle was a conclusion reached by Tom Weedin. I have been unable to find a specific reference to the Needle by Waltz. The only mention is that of the "picacho, butte, or sombrero [like] peak." It's quite possible that the earthquake of 1887 completely changed the look of the original mountain Waltz used for reference.

The location that does turn up time and again in my research is the western slopes of hills near Bluff Spring Mountain. I can't help but believe the Lost Dutchman lays somewhere within its close vicinity.

In his book, *The Missing Link*, H. Henry Sheffer, III, published sixteen clues to find the Lost Dutchman mine. Two of them, number five and thirteen, are reprinted here:

> Clue #5 involves three red hills. "If you pass three red hills you have gone too far." The Superstition Mountains include several red hills, but there are only two spots where there are three red hills together. One site is immediately north [of] Bluff Spring Mountain. The other three red hills we will let you find in the Superstition Wilderness.
>
> Clue #13 states, "A stone face can be found on the trail to my mine." One's imagination is the only limit to the number of stone faces which can be found or recognized in the maze of rocks found in the Superstition Wilderness. Major stone faces can be found on Bluff Spring Mountain, the north end of Palomino Mountain, near Fremont Saddle, in Trap Canyon, near Picacho Peak, in west Boulder Canyon near Willow Springs, in La Barge canyon below the Lower Box, and in many other locations throughout the Superstition Wilderness. Take your choice.

Finally, there is Sims Ely's personal account of how, in 1911, a ranch hand named Jimmy Anderson, discovered an old trail up the east side of Bluff Spring Mountain. The mountain rises abruptly on all sides, and until its discovery, it was believed that no trail led to the top. Anderson, in pursuit of a stray bull, accidentally broke through the dense brush that covered the lower slope and came upon an ancient trail, washed out and badly gullied but presenting unmistakable evidence that it once had been heavily used. Anderson reported his find to Bark and Ely. Viewing the site first hand, Ely described the pathway as "running at an angle to the right for a considerable distance, then doubling back, and finally zig-zagging its way to the top. And the truly astonishing thing was that the trail was deeply worn into the solid rock in many places, and everywhere it was at least three feet wide...."

The once free-flowing spring, now only a well situated at the base, and about two miles up the mountain, for which it was named, "has been curbed by a skillfully laid rock wall, which stands some two feet above the surface and reaches down a considerable depth."

A natural corral, several square miles in extent, well grassed and with several pools of living water, was discovered on the flat summit of the mountain. It was not only a corral but a fortress; half a dozen men armed with rifles could have easily fought off any band of prowling Apaches from the position.

Bark and Ely, accompanied by Anderson, explored the trail and believed it was too deeply worn to be the result of erosion alone. They reasoned that at sometime in the past hundreds of beasts of burden, probably mules, had been driven over the trail time after time. But why?

The Superstitions are almost treeless, save for the few cottonwoods in Fish Creek canyon. Even mesquite, large enough for timbering, is not easily found. Bark and Ely had never been able to explain the forty acres of mesquite stumps they had found on a plateau some ten miles northeast of the Bark ranch. The stumps measured from six to ten inches in diameter, and since green mesquite will not burn, they wouldn't have been cut for firewood. Only a mining operation would require such an amount of lumber, the heavy timbers used for shoring up the tunnels.

To have hauled the dressed tree trunks over the mountains to a mine pit would have been murderous work; yet, it was possible. Any timbers not used in the tunnels could have been used to cover up and camouflage the workings.

At the top of Bluff Spring Mountain they discovered easily identifiable mounds of mule bones and iron Mexican artifacts, further proof of their theory. The torturous work would have broken down any animal.

Reinney's brother searched for the mine until he died, and Herman continued looking for it up until the start of World War II. Julia made several other fruitless attempts to discover the mine, bankrupting herself. In the end, she was reduced to selling phony treasure maps to make a living. "The Curse of the Superstitions" became a popular phrase after Julia died. Destitute, she had to be buried at the town's expense. Reinney committed suicide in 1943, after a half century of searching for the mine.

Why did these people and hundreds of others like them risk everything to find the Lost Dutchman's Mine? Jacob reportedly told Julia that he estimated that there was "...at least $1,000,000 [in gold ore] yet to be taken out."

At today's gold prices, this equals over one hundred million dollars.

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Navajos and the Witch

By Judy Cox-Finney • Illustrated by Sparky Moore

In 1897, Richard Wetherill, famed cowboy discoverer of the Anasazi cliff dwellings of Mesa Verde, realized the small ranch he shared with his parents and brothers in Mancos Valley, Colorado, was not able to support such a large number of people. So, along with his wife, Marietta, and several other assorted family members, he headed south to a place that held great interest for this archeologist-cowboy, a desert canyon in New Mexico called Chaco Canyon. There he intended to ranch and to do what he liked best, excavate and preserve ancient prehistoric ruins. For Richard Wetherill, Chaco Canyon was a paradise with its hundreds of prehistoric ruins, many having never been explored. For his wife, Marietta Palmer-Wetherill, Chaco Canyon would also hold great promise, but not with the Native Americans of the past, but with the modern inhabitants of this dry area, the Navajos.

Marietta Palmer-Wetherill can best be described as a small dynamo who, even up to her death in the 1950s, had a deep, abiding desire to learn about people, especially those people whose culture was vastly dif-

McNitt Collection, Photograph #8584, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives

Marietta Wetherill, far right, was witness to some of the most secret Navajo ceremonies. Marietta's husband, Richard, third from left with pipe, is pictured playing cards on the Indian blanket.

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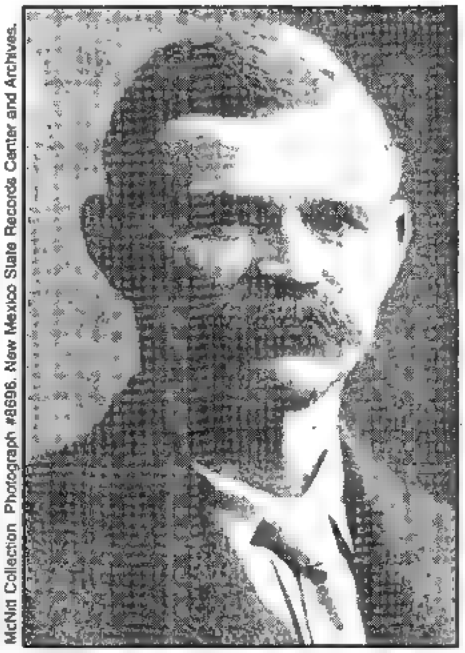
McNitt Collection. Photograph #65579. New Mexico State Records Center and Archives.

Mrs. Richard (Marietta) Wetherill.



McNitt Collection. Photograph #8696. New Mexico State Records Center and Archives.

Richard Wetherill.

McNitt Collection, Photograph #65578. New Mexico State Records Center and Archives.

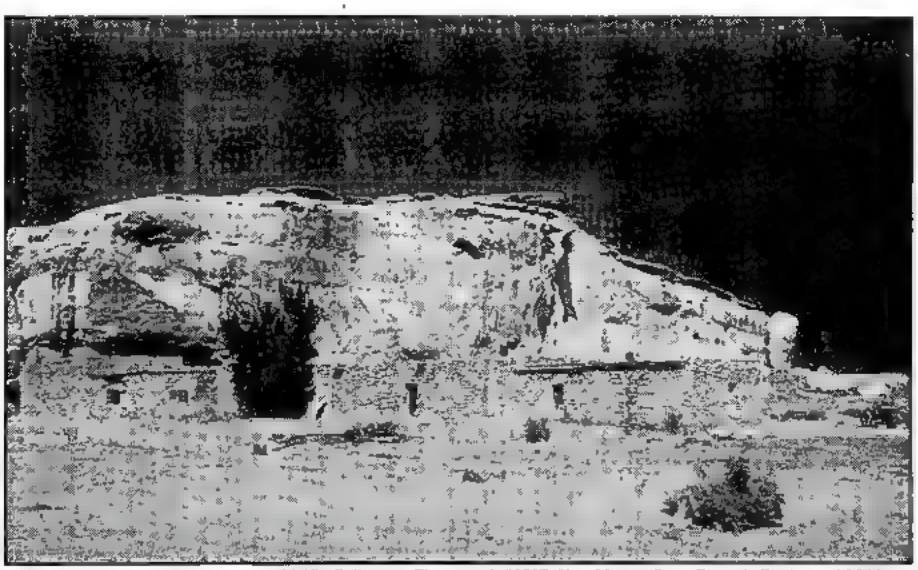
Hosteen Begay.

ferent than her own. Born to Sidney LaVern and Elizabeth Ann Hoag-Palmer, Marietta grew up in a family where music was a part of her daily existence. Her father played in John Philip Sousa's band, while her mother was an accomplished piano who played before Queen Victoria. After her father made money in real estate investments, he packed up his family and headed out to explore America. Using their music to break the ice with the Native Americans they encountered in their travels, the Palmer family soon found themselves visiting the newly discovered Anasazi Cliff dwellings of Mesa Verde and the Wetherill family. It took little time for Marietta, strong willed, full of life, and ready for anything, to capture Richard's heart.

Although Richard was thirty-seven years old and Marietta nineteen when they met, age seemed to never play a part in their short marriage. Unfortunately, violence did. Richard would be shot dead in Chaco Canyon in 1910, and Marietta would leave the area the next year to raise her family, without ever remarrying, in the cooler climate of Colorado. But, before the tragedy came the discoveries made by Richard and the great anthropological work done by Marietta.

Besides their ranch, the Wetherills established a trading post in Chaco Canyon. It was Marietta who took care of most of the post's business with the Navajos while Richard worked to understand the great civilization that had vanished from the area nearly 1000 years ago. Marietta's desire to learn about other cultures, her open-mindedness, her musical talent, and, as she put it, "I had a small tongue, so I learned languages easy," created a strong bond between her and the Navajos. The Navajos trusted the Anglo woman who the Apache Geromino once mistook for one of his tribe, and she in turn made sure they were treated fairly whenever they came to her trading post. As a matter of fact, so completely did she gain the Navajos' trust that they eventually included her as part of their tribe.

As a member of their tribe, Marietta was allowed to observe many of their most secret rituals, many of which no longer are practiced. In later years, Marietta would both write and speak of these ceremonies in books, magazines, and a series of oral tapes that can be found at the University of New Mexico. Needless to say, Marietta made many Navajo friends. It was because of her close friendship with



McNitt Collection, Photograph #6587. New Mexico State Records Center and Archives

Old Wetherill buildings west of Pueblo Bonito, circa 1951.

one particular Navajo, and the trust of the entire tribe, that Marietta found herself witness to one of the most remarkable, albeit gruesome, rituals ever performed by Native Americans in modern times.

A popular and prosperous Navajo medicine man by the name of Hosteen Hataalii Nez Begay and his family traded at the Wetherill post in Chaco Canyon. Laughing and telling jokes, the whole Begay family lit up the post with their lively banter every time they came in. Hataalii Nez thought so highly of Marietta that he even gave her a gift of some beautiful silver conchas that are still in the Wetherill family today.

As Hataalii Nez grew older, he began to feel bad, but he kept on holding his *hzn*, or doctoring sings. This was not a good thing.

One day he doctored a woman and she died. Then he failed to cure a boy who had a broken arm. With each failure, Hataalii Nez felt worse, and the tribe began to doubt him.

"Some evil spirit is troubling him and he's not making any cures," tribal members said.

Hataalii Nez sat up at night looking into the fire and asking the Great Spirit what was the matter with him. He would sing for hours on end, but things got worse.

Called on to give a Fire Dance for a man, the man died after the ceremony. Something had to be done.

"Call Hosteen Didlewishin Begay to come and give a Oomtah to cure Hataalii Nez of this evil spirit," ordered one of Hataalii Nez's wives.

And so they held the Oomtah cerémony. People who were not related to Hataalii donated the use of their hogans where sand paintings and songs were held at night, and then just before dawn, everyone stole away from the hogan, pulling Hataalii on a travois behind a horse to drag him over brush to force the evil spirit out of him. And then, they would race to get into another hogan before the evil spirit could catch up with them, chanting "Oomtah" all the way. They all remembered to duck through a pinón branch archway in front of each hogan while chanting so that the evil spirit wouldn't follow them. Masks and paints were worn by the singers so as to disguise them. Hundreds of men and women loped along on their ponies from hogan to hogan, painted and masked, chanting and singing away the evil spirit. By the time they came to the last hogan, they were dancing and screaming like mad people. Inside that last hogan, Hataalii Nez was covered with cedar bark and piñons while others slept near him on the ground. The next morning Hataalii Nez walked from that hogan cured because Hosteen Didlewishin said he was.

"Now everything will be fine," said the Navajos.

And, indeed, everything was fine, for a year. Then another patient died. Hataalii Nez' family ran away in the night to avoid the evil spirit that had returned. While they were gone their Paiute slaves stole their sheep.

No one would even speak to Hataalii Nez, much less hire him. Hataalii Nez began to worry and not eat. Not even Hosteen Didlewishin could find a reason for his problems or a way to remove the evil spirit.

Shunned, Hataalii Nez left his family and moved into a cave. Marietta heard about Hataalii from other Navajos who came to trade at her post. Worried, she decided to take him some food. She tracked him to a small cave.

Once a handsome figure, Hataalii Nez had turned many a maid's eye. His black hair shone like a raven's spring coat. Falling to his waist, his hair accented a strong chin, the determined set of his jaw,

Continued on page 34...

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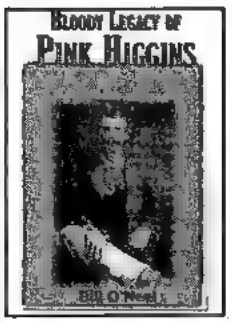

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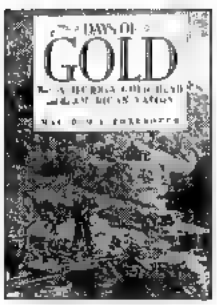

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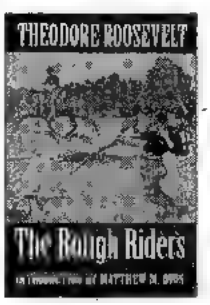

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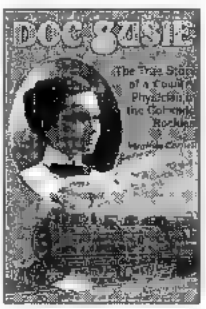

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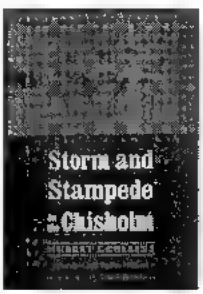

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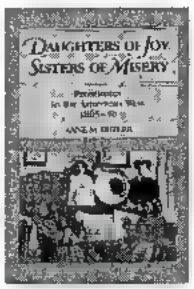

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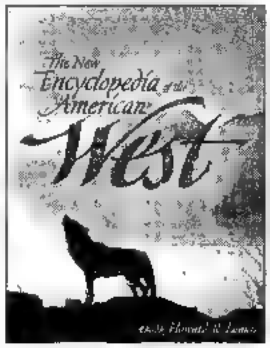

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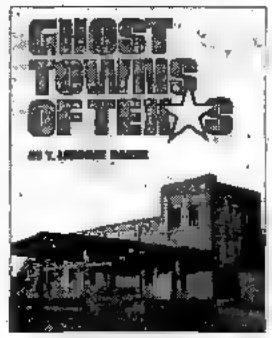

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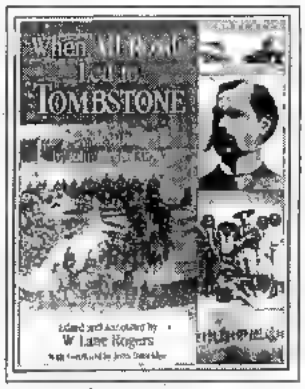

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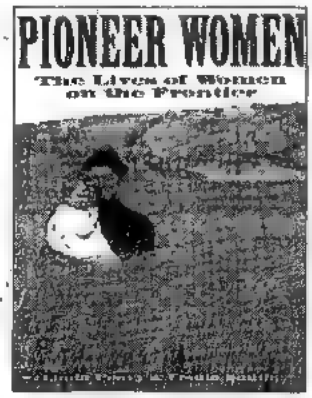

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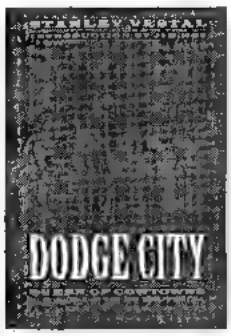

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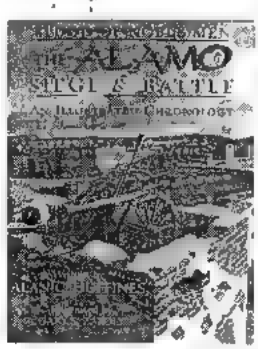

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and the dark eyes that could dance with laughter one moment and turn dark with anger the next. Children would run at his feet as he walked, arms open to the youngsters, a tall, straight, muscular body gleaming in the desert sun. But now, he sat hunched over, wasting away, his gray hair matting atop a dirty, wrinkled, skull-like face.

"Why are you living here?" Marietta asked, holding back her tears.

"My wives, children, mother, everyone's left me. I'm in such trouble. That evil spirit won't leave. It's killing me."

"But my brother saw one last year," Marietta pleaded.

"A man can see these things," argued the Navajo medicine man. "What if you are pregnant."

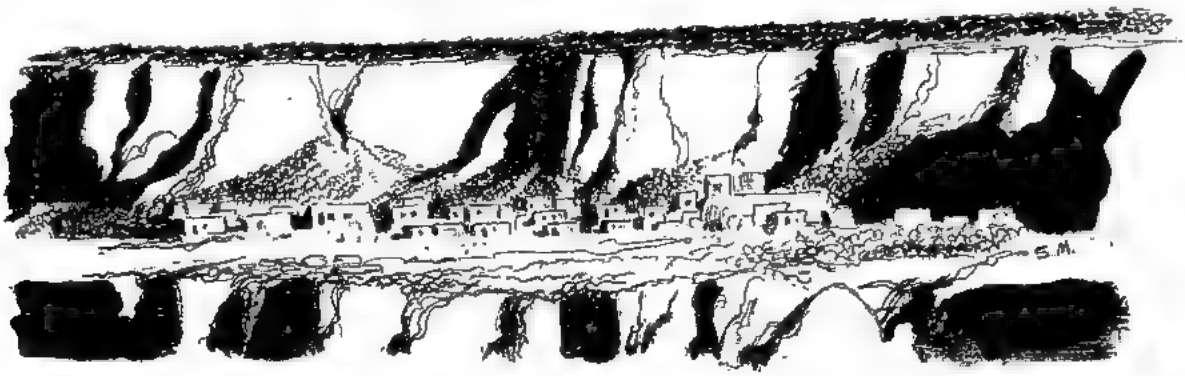
No matter how hard she argued, even when she called upon her adopted Navajo father, Marietta was forbidden to take her friend's side in the ceremony.

Finally, it was her husband, Richard, who reminded the Navajo leaders of their trust in Marietta and of the fact that one reason she had been made Navajo was to allow her to see their ceremonies so that she could accurately, and without bias, explain them to other non-Navajos.

old friend, something that the others didn't like.

At first all Marietta saw was Hataalii Nez sitting near the wall, and two or three other men all sitting by their own fire, chanting and pulling something from a buckskin bag under their blankets and sprinkling it on their fires. All else was silent, not noisy like the other ceremonies she had seen. Of course, those other ceremonies were about life, Marietta reminded herself. This one was about death.

Maybe I've gotten myself into something I can't handle, Marietta thought as she watched her old friend's sunken body shiver near the small fire.



"Come down and live with us then," Marietta offered.

"No, evil will come to you then," he said as he turned his face away from his friend.

"What can I do to help you?" Marietta's words seemed to fall upon deaf ears.

"You know I'm going to die," he finally admitted. "I'd rather die here, but the Navajo have declared me a witch. They are afraid of the evil spirit inside of me."

All that winter Marietta took her sick friend food and tried to get him to come down and live with her family, but he refused. Finally, the day came when he was to ride back into the canyon and face the ceremony awaiting all witches. Marietta wanted to be with her friend in his time of need, but Didlewishin would not hear of it.

"It's not a nice thing to see," he told her. "It will make you sick. There's only a few Navajo who see such things."

Richard's argument swayed the men, and Marietta, wearing a black blanket, rode her favorite mare up Chaco Canyon to where a sun symbol had been painted upon the rock. After the medicine men had painted her face black, she was shown where to sit. Before taking her seat, Marietta went over and shook hands one last time with her

With the setting of the sun the ceremony began.

Hosteen Didlewishin Begay got up from his fire and walked over to Hataalii Nez and said something to him. Hataalii Nez got up and walked over to a bed of sand they had spread on the ground. He lay down on the sand, stretched out flat with his arms out a little ways from

his body. He laid perfectly still, like he was finally at rest. Didlewishin began to chant and use his rattles.

"For the last chant, for the last chant," he chanted. "For the last time I'm asking to send a sign. For the last chant, Nataani Soto, send a sign." The two other men repeated the chant. If a lizard or snake had crossed the sand, Hataalii Nez would have lived. But this evening, no sign came from the Great Spirit.

"Spare this man," Didlewishin Begay raised his hands to the sky. "Spare this man."

The five people held their breath.

Nothing.

Didlewishin Begay dropped his hands.

From the darkness a very old woman came to Hataalii Nez with something wrapped in a green leaf. She handed it to Didlewishin Begay who placed it into Hataalii Nez's mouth. Not rising, Hataalii Nez swallowed it with great difficulty. His whole body quivered twice before becoming perfectly still.

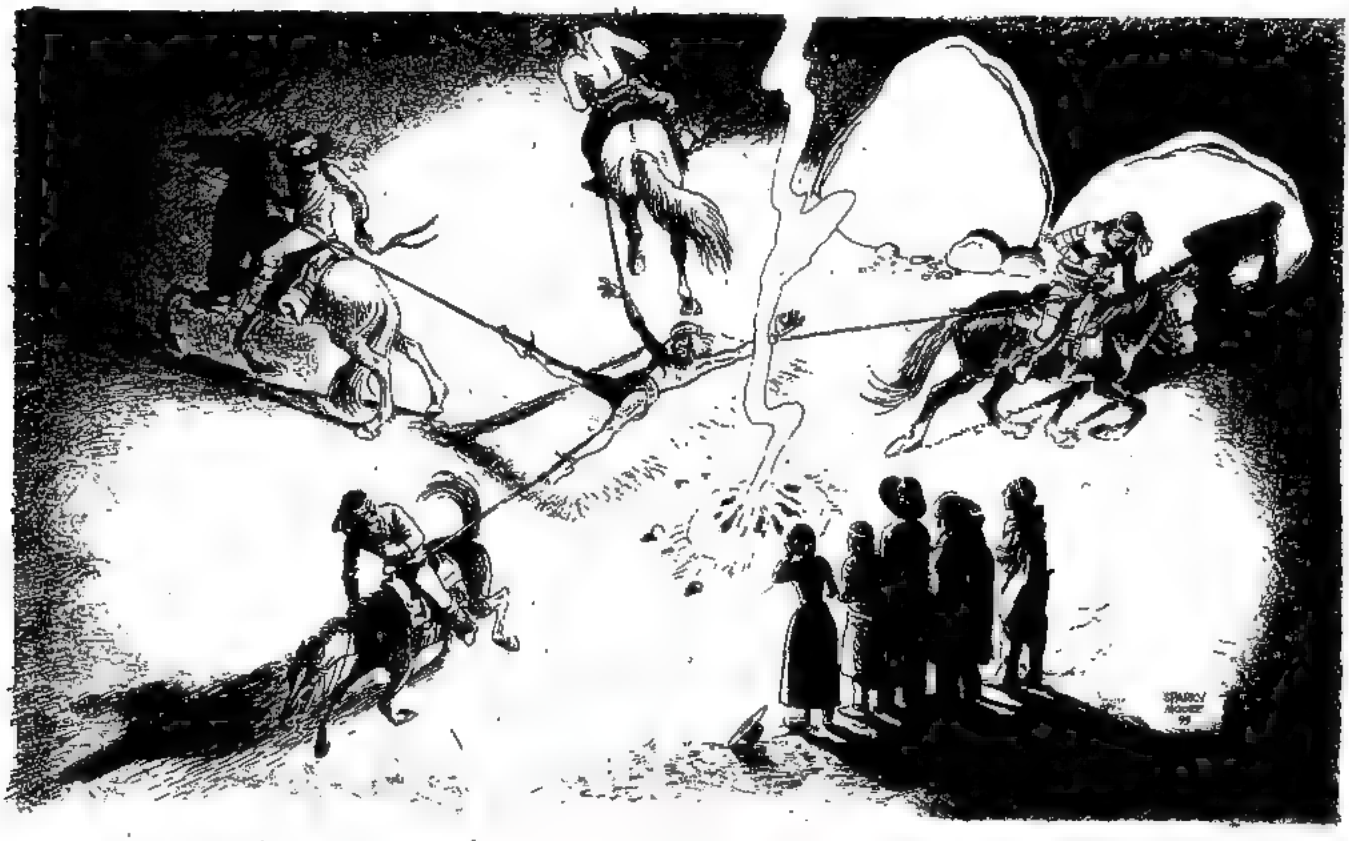
Four horsemen came out from behind the rocks, faces painted black with white horizontal lines to disguise their identities. Dismounting, each rider put a rope around one of Hataalii Nez' limbs, got back onto their horses and rode away. Before Marietta could shut her eyes she saw one of Hataalii's arms pulled off. It only took a few seconds for the sound of the horses' hooves to fade into the deep silence of the desert night.

Didlewishin Begay brought Marietta her horse. She knew there was no use in staying. She rode home to lay awake, thinking of what was occurring out there in the dark canyon.

This is what the Navajo medicine men told Marietta about this ceremony: Each horseman was selected by a different medicine man. Nobody wants to do this job, but someone has to. The riders do it to help their people. The riders' identities are kept from everyone; not even the medicine men know who all the riders are. And no one will ever tell who they were. Each man dragged his part of the body as far away from hogans and people as possible, staying close to a preset course. Their trails were obliterated with piled up sand and rocks so that the path would never be seen. After they start their ride, the men never look back. Just as the sun came up, they dropped the rope from the saddle and kept right on riding. Very seldom were these horses ridden again; they became *chindee* horses, devil horses.

"North, south, east and west, when a witch is killed it's a bad thing. The body must be dismembered so that it can never get together again. That is the bad part about it because when you are dismembered you can never be a human being again. You can never be anything. Even the spirit is torn apart so that it can't go to the spirit world and come back here in another body. It's gone forever, that's the worse part."

In a few months, Marietta's life was shattered by her husband's murder. She left Chaco Canyon never to return, but her memories of the Navajos and their lifestyle stayed with her until she closed her eyes in eternal sleep.



La Llorona

New Mexico's Weeping Woman

By Lynda Sánchez
Illustrated by the late Walter R. Henn

La Llorona emerges from the world of the supernatural as a pale apparition roaming the waterways of many valleys of New Mexico and the lands south of the Rio Grande.

For centuries Native Americans and Hispanic people have lived with the reality of *brujas* and *brujeria* (witches or witchcraft) and *fantasmas* (ghosts). They are surrounded by tales of the occult, and believe in the reality of legends like those of La Llorona or Spider Woman.

Both Apaches and Navajos have known from their sacred beginnings that one does not speak the name of the deceased; that is like calling the dead back to earth and hence endangering one's own life or family. Sometimes the most evil characteristics of the dead are so intensified after death they present even more danger to the living.

It is also well known that those who may truly rest in peace after death are individuals who either die at birth or those who die directly from natural causes of aging. The remainder lie in that mysterious realm of the nether world.

Ghosts from the domain of the Athabascan world are usually dark or obscure, whereas the Hispanic view them as pale apparitions. They can be seen as flashes of flame or desert whirlwinds (dust devils). As with most of the world's cultures they are only seen at night.

There are innumerable haunting, terrifying experiences attributed to La Llorona. For some she is a reality, and nothing can be as frightening as hearing, seeing, or even catching glimpses of the pale, ghost-like woman in white, moving along the rivers of isolated communities, moaning and crying as she searches for her lost, or in some cases, murdered children. Almost every community has their localized La Llorona legends.

One *abuelita* (grandmother) told me years ago, "¡Ay! La Llorona me asusteó—una noche, pero tan terrible. [Ay, the weeping woman scared me really bad one night.] Lloró y lloró en una voz trágica y con mucha tristeza. [She wailed and moaned in such a tragic and sad voice.]"

Her haunting cries pierce the night. The anguish and the heartache represented by the weeping woman as she searches for her lost children strikes fear into just about everyone, causing parents to frantically search for their own children if they are not in by nightfall. (It can also be stated that it is a good method to scare little children and will send them scurrying home before dark, much like the Navajo tales of Spider Woman coming for misbehaving youngsters.)

This fear is often as prevalent today as it was during the past four centuries on the New Mexican frontier. The legends about La Llorona continue to grow and change with the times. The ghostly apparition of a lovely young woman keening for her children is often unbearable.

Residents of the tiny pueblos and villages that nestle along meandering streams and rivers from the Rio Grande and Pecos to the smaller Rios Bonito, Hondo, or Chama can be down right scared! The tradition is so entrenched among Hispanic and Native Americans that a person can easily fall under the spell of the weeping woman even if he or she doesn't believe in the story.

In some communities like Anton Chico it has been claimed that the mournful howling of the coyote is attributed to La Llorona. Parents warn their children to be good, for if they are not, she will steal them away in retribution for the children she lost long ago. These beliefs are so strong that you cannot prevent them, you either succumb to them yourself, or don't discuss the issue with friends and neighbors.

How did this tale become such a widespread and well-known legend and why has it persevered for centuries? Witnesses claim, of course, that it is not a legend, but reality. She is almost always dressed in white as she glides in and out of the somber shadows along the way. Her hair is long and glistening black. She is young and she wants your soul. Her quest often leads to murder and kidnapping of young children. But, why?

As the Spanish conquistador,

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Hernando Cortez, and his men rode forth in battle gear into Tenochtitlán (now Mexico City) claiming lands, peoples, and souls for the glory of God and the king of Spain, they destroyed entire cultures. They crushed the Aztec civilization and changed the face of the lands they conquered.

Cortez also brought with him a woman known as Malinche or Doña Marina. She had been his guide and major assistant. Without her knowledge of the land and the native languages, he could never have survived and won battle after battle. He could never have subdued the powerful Aztec leader, Moctezuma, nor gained the glory and riches beyond imagination that he and his men sought without this unusual woman by his side. She eventually became his mistress and bore him a child.

Marina was a beautiful young "slave" girl, purchased after landing along the coast of Mexico. Cortez did not realize at the time that she was actually a noble woman, betrayed by members of her own family. They had sold her into slavery during a major war among their people.

She was about sixteen when her adventures with the Spanish conquistadors began. The history of Mexico and the Southwest would

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have been written in a far different style if it had not been for Marina.

Unfortunately, the down side to this story is that she also became a betrayer of her people. Many view Doña Marina as not only having played a major role in Cortez' conquest of the Indian civilizations, but also as the spirit often seen in Mexican myths and ghostly tales, luring her people to a watery grave. Ultimately, Marina has become the epitome of La Llorona, as she weeps for the destruction she dealt to her tribal people. Her children, in these instances were really the millions of Indians who became slaves at the hands of the conquistadors.

Today, the Spanish term, Malinchista, means an individual who copies the customs of foreigners or an evil woman who is a traitor and betrayer of her people. It is a heavy burden to bear and as time passed and the conquistadors and colonists moved north into the lands of today's Southwest, so too did the many versions of the legend of La Llorona.

In New Mexico, this legend is among the strongest beliefs of the Hispanic population. Mostly they tell the story of a young native girl, or Hispanic woman, who dresses up during fiestas and dances with one and all. She is having such a wonderful time she forgets she left her children unattended. Being resentful of this unwanted responsibility she angrily drowns her children in the river, hoping for freedom once again.

After the murder of her children the "white lady," as she is sometimes called, kills herself in remorse. Unable to rest in her grave the ghost of the white lady roams as La Llorona. She mourns and cries out for her poor children wherever she goes. As she searches, the rustling of her long white gown and her crying may be heard near any body of water and sometimes through hills or city streets. On occasion she sings to entice both men and children to avenge the death of her own offspring.

Some attribute great "power" to this apparition. She can influence certain events and may have the power to lure anyone's children to come to her. One popular version involves negligence, rather than murder. A young mother took her small son to wash clothes at the river's edge. The boy wandered off and began to play near the water. He was drawn by the beauty of a reflection and falls into a deep hole and drowns. Some claim the reflection in the water was the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe, the patron saint of Mexico, surrounded by beautiful flowers.

When the mother could not find her child, she returned home alone where she was questioned by the patriarch of the family, the child's *abuelo*. Together they return to look for the boy and discover the body floating in a large *charco* or hole. As they retrieve the body, they see, below the water, the image of the Virgin. Could this vision really have been what enticed the child, or was the cause of death here, as in other situations, the negligence of the mother?

Since La Llorona is usually associated with water, great floods often play a role in the story. There can be nothing more awesome than a flood, and this may be a carry-over from the flooding experienced in the Mesilla Valley more than a century ago. After people lost their homes and livelihoods, innumerable settlers headed north, toward the Hondo and Bonito river valleys of southern New Mexico.

One popular version tells of two young children being lost during one of the infrequent floods along the Hondo. They were swept from a bridge down the river and lost forever. Shortly afterward the mother died. However, following the mother's death people from the village began to hear cries and wails near the river at night as she returned to look for her lost children.

Another account claims a young mother hesitated too long before she left her home along a raging river. Flood waters rose quickly, bringing along with them chickens, pigs, cows, and other drowning animals. The churning waters wrenched the children from their hiding place. As the mother tried to enter the water to save her children it swirled up past her neck and she was forced to return to safety or herself drown.

Perhaps it would have been best if she had drowned; she became so haunted, so thin and sick that she died weeping and her wrenching cries have been heard ever since.

And so it is with the woman who weeps; as the *vieja* said to her grandchildren, "¡Ten cuidado, porque siempre esta allí! [Be careful, because she is always there!]"

After the murder of her children the "white lady", as she is sometimes called, kills herself in remorse.

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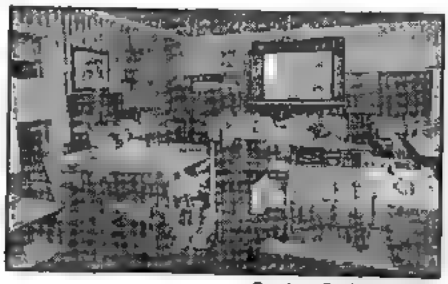
CIMARRON'S ST. JAMES:

THE HOTEL WITH AN UNSAINTLY PAST

By Jane Choate

Western historian Robert DeArment noted that "Once a . . legend is created you can't kill it with a bullet." This is certainly true of humans and, in at least one instance, a hotel.

Unfortunately, Henri Lambert was not aware of this when he opened the St. James Hotel in 1880 as a stage stop on the Santa Fe Trail. Lambert had been the field cook for General Ulysses S. Grant during the last half of the Civil War and then moved on to become President Abraham Lincoln's White House chef. Following Lincoln's assassination, Lambert went to cook in the goldfields near Cimarron, New Mexico, an original part of Lucien Maxwell's land grant.

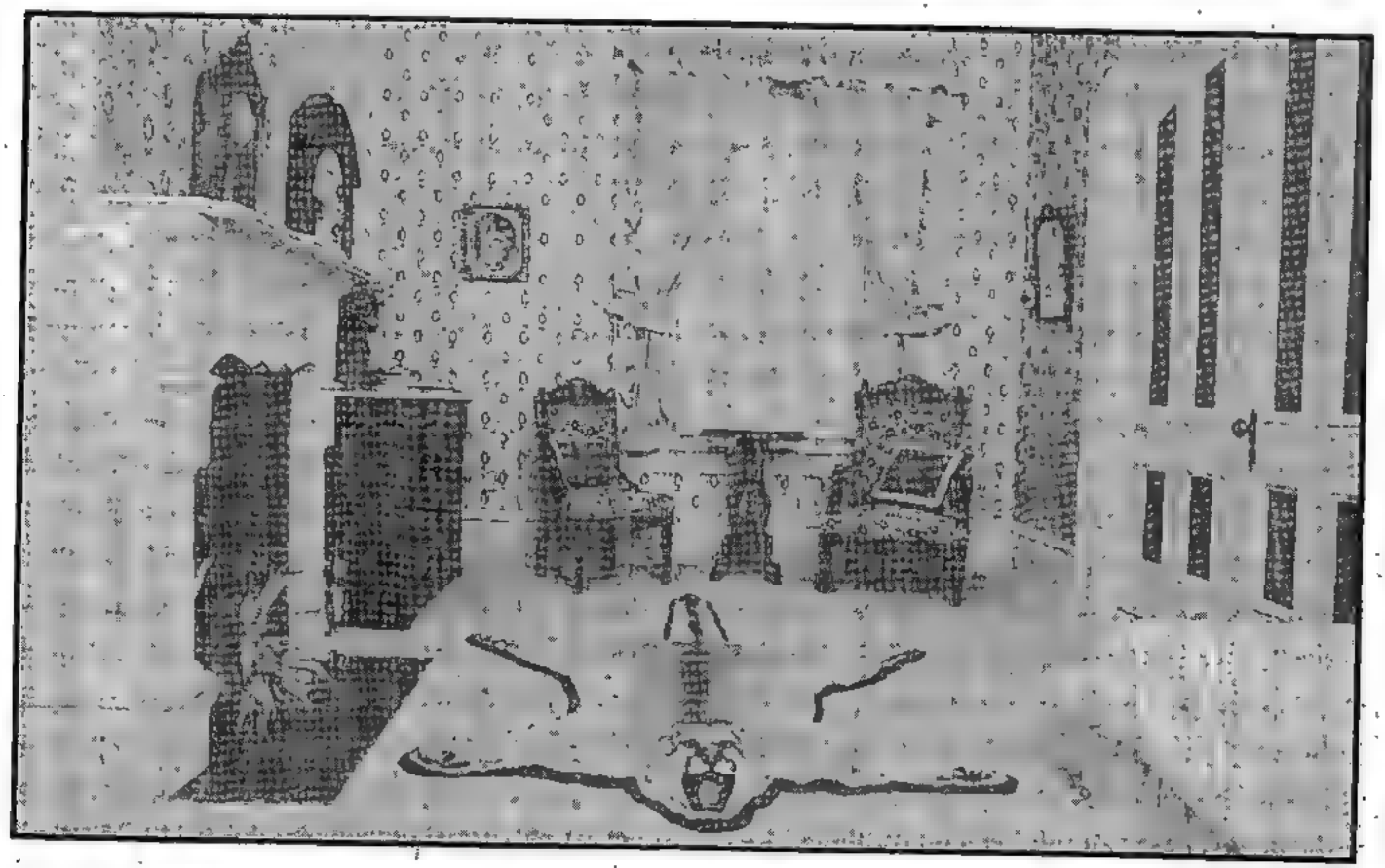


Courtesy St. James Hotel

The dining room of the St. James originally served as the hotel's bar.

Maxwell had worked as a hunter for John Frémont on two expeditions before settling down and marrying the daughter of one of the owners of what would later be called the Maxwell Land Grant. He eventually took possession of the entire former Spanish grant, which consisted of 1.7 million acres (over 2,100 square miles). For a time this made him the largest private land holder in the Western Hemisphere.

Lambert's hopes for the St. James in Cimarron were that it would be the finest hotel in the



Courtesy St. James Hotel

The Bat Masterson Room Refurbished with the original fixtures, this room looks much the way it did when the legendary lawman stayed there in 1887

West. Accordingly, he ordered furniture, crystal, and china from France at great expense. Lambert commissioned the famous and colorful "Uncle" Dick Wootton to transport most of his valuable furnishings over Wootton's toll road on the Santa Fe Trail at Raton Pass. One interesting aside is that Wootton would eventually be credited with developing part of Maxwell's ranch into the town of Cimarron.

At that time, the fee for one wagon on the toll road was between $1.00-$1.50, and Lambert was transporting by ox cart everything from his precious china to velvet draperies, glass mirrors, marble-topped tables, and four-poster beds.

Many of Lambert's clients were a far cry from guests attending formal dinners in Lincoln's White House. Rather they were a mix of ranchers, travelers, furloughed soldiers from nearby Fort Union, and some of the West's most notable lawmen and outlaws.

Old hotel registers, now kept under lock and key, indicate that a "Who's Who in the Wild West" frequented the St. James. Kit Carson, Black Jack Ketchum, Frederic Remington, and Wyatt Earp are all numbered among the patrons. New Mexico Governor Lew Wallace wrote parts of *Ben Hur* and Zane Grey penned the novel *Fighting Caravans* while staying there. Local legend has it that outlaw Clay Allison danced naked on the bar when he had had too much to drink. On August 29, 1881, Jesse James registered under his alias, R.H. Howard, and stayed in Room #14. Ironically, Bob Ford, James' slayer, had previously stayed in that same room.

All of the rooms and suites in the old part of the hotel have been restored, furnished with their original antiques, and named for those who stayed in them. Today's traveler can choose from among accommodations named for Bat Masterson, William F. Cody, Annie Oakley, and Thumbilina, the small Barnum & Bailey headliner, to name but a few.

The walls of the hallways outside the second-floor rooms are covered with memorabilia of former guests. There is no documentation to indicate that Billy the Kid ever stayed at the St. James, but there is one curious photograph with the following caption, "Billy the Kid?? Probably. John Chisum and Pete Maxwell said it was. Certain people claim he was in Cimarron. No proof!" Reading this, one can't help but remember that Billy did associate with John Chisum during the Lincoln County War and was killed in Pete Maxwell's bedroom. There is the verified signature of Pat Garrett, however, in one of the St. James registers.

Courtesy St. James Hotel

The lobby of the St. James Hotel offers visitors a historic setting to sit and discuss the retreat's historic and haunting past.

Another artifact from the heyday of the St. James is a framed ballad written by Clay Allison to his wife:

> Oh, may you in hours of bliss
> When pleasures are forgot,
> Cast one lingering look on this
> & reading—forget me not.
> Will you, Loving Clay

According to hotel legend, the lovesick Allison wrote poetry to his wife on its walls; the above is certainly tangible proof of that legend.

This image of Allison is in direct contrast to a description by western writer-historian J. Frank Dobie, who characterized the "gentleman gunfighter" as "...quixotically independent in interpreting what constituted his rights. The more whiskey he drank the more rights he possessed and sometimes when he came to town he bought a great deal of whiskey. He was generous with it however, even insisting on his horse enjoying a fair portion."

It is reported that Allison once took exception to something the local newspaper had written about him and threw the paper's printing press and all of its other equipment into the Cimarron River. The next week the paper managed to come out with a four-page edition. The inside simply said, "Earthquake—postponed."

In addition to scribbling on the hotel's wallpaper, Allison must have sorely tried the patience of Henri Lambert. The same day he shot and killed Pancho Griego in the St. James bar, Davy Crockett, II (nephew of the Alamo hero); and a sidekick killed three black soldiers from Fort Union on the hotel grounds, claiming "self defense."

There were twenty-six killings in the early days of the St. James. Supposedly, over four hundred bullet holes appeared in the ceiling of the bar, causing Lambert to install a new one consisting of two layers of hardwood covered by pressed tin. Ostensibly this was to protect those trying to sleep on the second floor. Today, the bar is an elegant dining room, but bullet holes still dot the tin ceiling.

Another local legend maintains

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that Buffalo Bill Cody met Annie Oakley in the hotel bar. She was bragging about her shooting ability and Cody raised a coin over his head, holding it between two fingers, and told her to shoot the coin away. She did, and Cody hired her on the spot to tour with his wild west show. According to the Cimarron Historical Society, Cody's Wild West never performed in that town but Cody did become the godfather of Lambert's son, Fred.

In addition to its colorful history, the St. James reportedly has three ghosts which were a topic of the television series "Unsolved Mysteries."

Mary, wife of Henri Lambert, died shortly after the hotel opened. Several people have claimed to have communicated with her and, when she answers, "yes," an aroma of perfume rises in her room.

courtesy St. James Hotel

Mary Lambert's room plays host to one of the hotel's many ghosts, the wife of St James founder Henri Lambert.

Another ghost has been named "The Imp" by the hotel staff, who take him in stride while he levitates pitchers in the kitchen and plays with the telephones.

During the filming of the television show, the ghost in Room #18 was so disagreeable that the producers prevailed upon the owners to call in a psychic. The ghost had already knocked down one of the owners, Pat Loree, so they agreed. The psychic said that the ghost was named Thomas or J. Wright and that he had won the hotel in a poker game but was murdered the next day. According to the psychic, Wright believed that he still owned the hotel and resented any intrusion into his room. Mrs. Loree was given three dates by the psychic. Upon researching them in an old hotel register, it was discovered that a T.J. Wright had indeed stayed at the hotel on those dates. Today, his room remains locked and unavailable to guests, but he seems content to remain inside and not harass visitors.

Patrons of the St. James can view a video of the "Unsolved Mysteries" episode in the antique-filled lobby.

Cimarron makes an ideal stopover for trips to other New Mexican towns whose history was often shaped by St. James inhabitants. The ruins of Fort Union, northeast of Las Vegas, can still be viewed. Between 1851 and 1891, this was the largest garrison in the Southwest and ruts of the Santa Fe Trail can also be seen beside the ruins.

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the St. James is open throughout the year. Cimarron is located on Route 64, midway between Raton and Taos. For today's visitor, it is difficult to imagine that on one occasion the *Las Vegas* (New Mexico) *Gazette* noted, "Everything is quiet at Cimarron. Nobody has been killed there in three days."

THROUGH THE EYES OF A DEAD MAN

By William Klette
Illustrated by Michael Nunnally

"At the request of friends of Mr. Cornelius Hill, the victim of the Spring Valley Murder, Sutterly, the well-known photographer of this City took pictures of the eyes of the deceased. Should anything definite be developed in this operation, it may assist in the detection of the murderers. The chance of success in this photographic operation would seem slight as many hours have elapsed since the murder was committed. Besides, this is an experiment the precedents of which little of a definite nature has been established." The *Territorial Enterprise,* Virginia City, Nevada, April 12, 1867

A hundred years ago, with photography still in its infancy, many believed that the eye of a murdered person could retain the image of the murderer even after death. What was the difference, they reasoned, between the eye and a camera? Since both had a lens an imprint should be possible with either. Photos of the eye were often taken and any aberration in the retina would be hailed as proof of this theory.

Cornelius A.B. Hill, the victim described in the above *Enterprise* newspaper article, was born in Canada, arriving in Nevada early in the 1860s, at the start of the Comstock silver boom. With schooling in geology, it was only natural that he would engage in mining, and he soon became manager of two mills, the Daney, which refined both gold and silver, and the Island Mill, which refined only silver. In 1863, he sent for his childhood sweetheart, Ellen Mary Palmer, and they were married in San Francisco that same year. The young couple returned to Spring Valley, Nevada, near Silver City, where they would live for the next three years.

Author's Collection

Cornelius A.B. Hill, Spring Valley murder victim, whose eyes were photographed in the hopes that they had retained the image of his murderer.

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Each week Hill would make the drive from his home near the Daney Mill, to Virginia City, to pick up the payroll for his employees. Ellen Mary usually went with him, riding in the buggy with a pistol on her lap, hidden discreetly under blanket. But on April 9, 1867, she was ill and stayed at home.

After promising his wife that he would not pick up the payroll without her, Hill drove to Virginia City to attend to some business. Gold amalgam had been disappearing from the Daney operation and he was hoping to hire someone to act as what he called a "spy." While there he went to the bank where he received $300 in gold coin and several checks drawn on the Bank of California and payable in San Francisco. Later that afternoon, he was seen passing through both Gold Hill and Silver City. That was the last time he was seen alive.

About 6 o'clock that same evening, an employee of the Daney Mill was walking home and recognized Hill's buggy, with the team still hitched, tied to the end of an abandoned laundry building a mile south of Silver City. Being in a hurry for his supper, the employee didn't stop to investigate.

Ellen Mary sat up most of the night waiting for her husband to return, finally calling on her brother, Walter Palmer, to investigate. The next morning he found that Hill's two horses had come back to the stable after having evidently been unhitched from the buggy and left tied until they broke loose. The hitching straps were later found still fastened to the end of the laundry.

Fearing that Hill might have had a serious accident, Palmer saddled one of the horses and rode to Silver City, asking for information along the way. While backtracking towards the Daney he passed the old laundry and noticed the buggy unattended. Just inside the building he found Hill, face down on the dirty floor, his hands tied behind his back and his throat cut.

Dr. P.T. Kirby, of Silver City, who made the postmortem examination of the body, found two wounds, one a small, nonfatal cut that entered just below the heart and glanced off a rib, and a four-inch slit in the throat that severed the trachea and the right jugular vein. Hill's pockets were turned inside out and the gold coins and other valuables he had were gone. It was probably Kirby who requested that the photos of the eyes be made.

There was no sign of a struggle.

Rewards totaled almost $10,000, the largest amount ever offered in Nevada up to that time, for the arrest and conviction of Hill's murderers.

The killers had tied Hill's hands and then held his head over a hole in the floor when they cut his throat, laying the body back when the gaping wound had stopped bleeding.

Because this type of crime was called a "Spanish Murder," suspicion naturally fell on the local Mexican population, especially since someone with a dark complexion was seen in the area the afternoon of the murder. When two Mexicans were arrested the next day in Silver City, panic swept the remainder and many packed up and left. A horse also disappeared that same night and its owner believed that it was stolen to aid in their flight.

Rewards totaled almost $10,000, the largest amount ever offered in Nevada up to that time, for the arrest and conviction of Hill's murderers. It wasn't long before Lyon County Sheriff George Shaw would have two men, Manuel Dutra DeSota and Samuel C. Day, in custody and charged with murder. Both were employees of the Daney Mill and would have known of Hill's weekly payroll trip.

Although evidence against the two was scant and strictly circumstantial, they were arraigned and the case was set for trial the following July 13, in the Lyon County District Court in Dayton.

The trial lasted only three days. Court records show that several of the prosecution witnesses, probably in hopes of sharing in the large reward, had a tendency to embellish their testimonies and several later would be charged with perjury. Because of Hill's popularity in the community, there was even talk of possible vigilante action. Charges of police brutality were made by Day, who claimed deputies tried to force him into further implicating DeSota

But when the turbulent trial ended, the jury was out just two hours before bringing in a verdict of not guilty.

Both men immediately left town and were never heard of again.

Strangely enough, two of the strongest defense witnesses were George and William Hill, brothers of the murdered man, who both felt that DeSota and Day were innocent. William Hill even went so far as to pay DeSota $125 for wages lost while he was in custody.

In 1886, an article in a Nevada newspaper, reminiscing about the murder, stated, "one of the murderers, on his dying bed and in order to ease his conscience, gave the names of his accomplices" in the murder. However, there is no mention of the whereabouts of this deathbed confession, no one was ever arrested, and the case was never solved.

As for the pictures of Hill's eyes, the *Territorial Enterprise* would report, "after careful examination of the photos, no impressions or outlines could be seen. However, the negatives will be sent to San Francisco where enlargements can be made for further study."

The notion of a dead man's eyes holding the key to murder was slow to disappear. In Edwardian England, twenty years later, the eyes of the victims of Jack the Ripper were all photographed. Some theories were hard to put to rest.

Author's Collection

Dr. P.T. Kirby, of Gold Hill, Nevada, performed the autopsy on Cornelius Hill and requested the man's eyes photographed in hopes of securing an image of his killers

The eerie sound of a suicide's footsteps...An iron gate that swings open by itself, then quietly closes...Table settings mysteriously shoved to the centers of tables in the restaurant...A light that moves from window to window on the third floor...

BUFFALO BILL'S HAUNTED HOME ON THE RANGE

The Sheridan Inn was built in 1893 as a joint venture between the Burlington and Missouri Railroad and the Sheridan Land Company. The building stands across from the railroad depot at the corner of Broadway and Fifth in Sheridan, Wyoming. Now a National Historic Landmark, the inn is an impressive multi-gabled wooden structure with a wide porch extending across the front. It was once listed in Ripley's *Believe It Or Not* as "The House of 69 Gables."

When the inn opened in the spring of 1893 it was considered the finest hotel between Chicago and the West Coast. Bedrooms were small but luxurious, with oak furniture, Brussels carpets, and elegant wallpapers. Steam pipes provided warmth on frigid winter nights and the inn's own generator produced electricity for the first electric lights in Sheridan.

The inn quickly became a center of social events for the surrounding communities and its guest list reads like a "who's who" of the West. Calamity Jane, General Nelson A. Miles, Charlie Russell, Will Rogers, and Ernest Hemingway all stayed there. For years the hotel was also the home-away-from-home of famed western showman Buffalo Bill Cody.

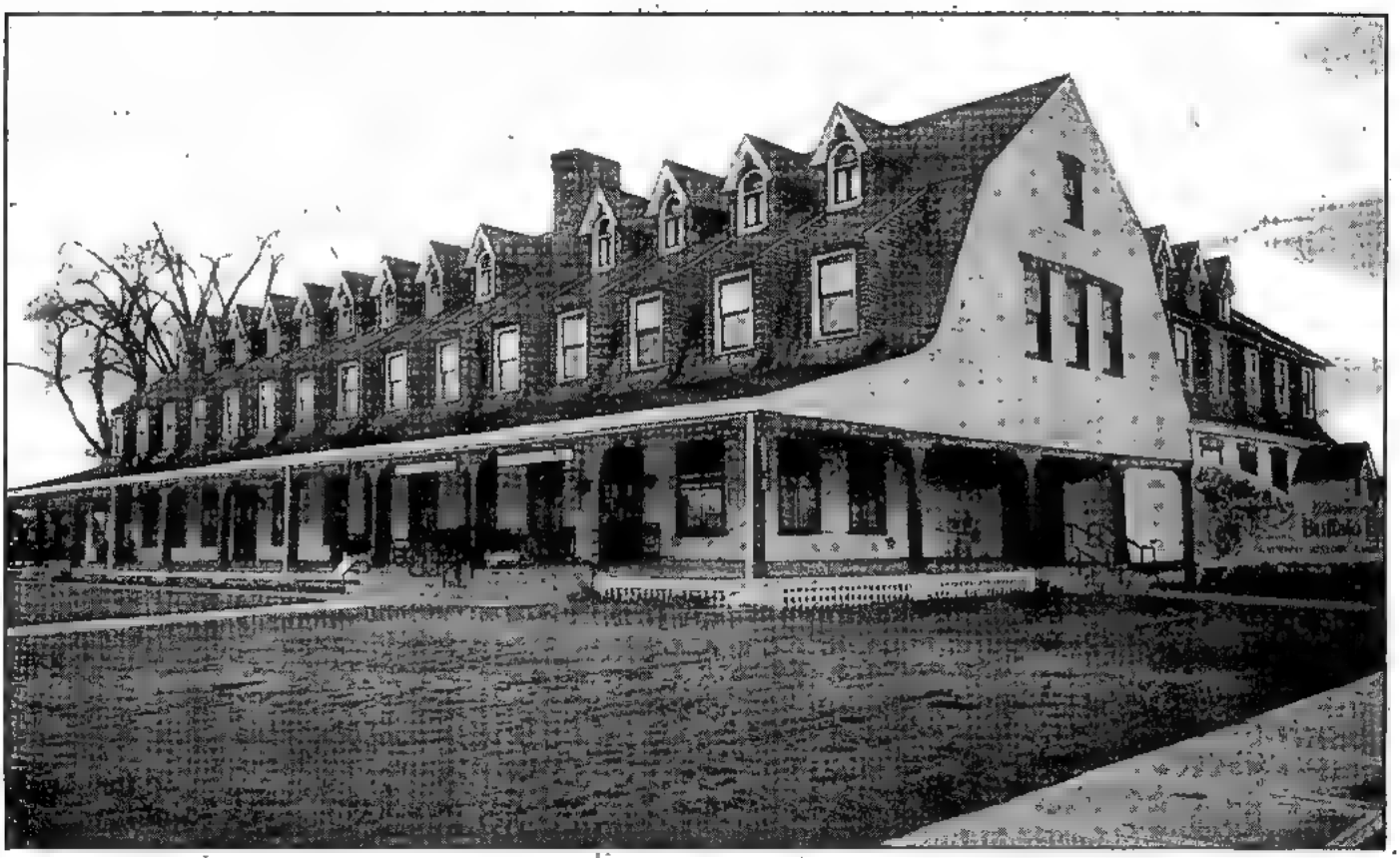
Cody had close friends in Sheridan and paid the first of many visits to the lively little town in 1894. He must have enjoyed his stay at the Sheridan Inn, for he invested considerable money in the hotel and an adjoining livery stable. He returned as often as possible between Wild West tours to relax and escape, at least briefly, from the pressures and responsibilities that he confided to his sister were sometimes overwhelming.

His daughter, Arta, and her husband, Horton Boal, settled on a ranch nearby and would stay at the inn whenever Cody was in residence. "The Colonel" sometimes auditioned cowboys for his internationally renowned shows from a cane rocking chair on the north porch. Those who got the coveted nod would ride their horses right up to the bar and buy a round of drinks for the house.

Cody's popularity plunged when he filed for divorce from his wife in 1905. He did not return to Sheridan for many years. The aging showman paid his last visit in August 1914, when he and his wife, now reconciled, were warmly received by the townspeople. Cody died on January 10, 1917.

The Sheridan Inn managed to weather the depression of the 1930s and the war years, but was forced to close in 1965 when it was no longer able to pass fire inspections. Most of its furnishings were sold off. Rescued by artist Neltje King mere hours before demolition, it now belongs to the city and county of Sheridan. It is leased to the Heri-

By Karen D. Stevens



Author's Photo

The Sheridan Inn Late at night, an eerie light can occasionally be seen moving from window to window on the third floor.

tage Society for one dollar a year. Funding for its upkeep and continuing renovation come from tours, gift shop sales, and Sunday brunches, and from hosting special events in its enormous ballroom.

Does the spirit of Colonel Cody return to linger where some of his happiest hours were spent? Apparently not, but there is little doubt that the Sheridan Inn is haunted, and by not one but three ghosts, each associated with the inn's early history.

The first is thought to be the spirit of Winnie Grinnell, who died at the inn at the age of sixteen in 1894. Her father, businessman C.H. Grinnell, had helped form the Sheridan Land Company, which financed the inn. Winnie's ghost is usually described by witnesses as a gossamer "something" flitting along the passageways.

The second ghost is that of Horton Boal, Cody's son-in-law, who committed suicide in his room at the Sheridan Inn on October 27, 1902. The cause seems to have been the impending separation between Boal and his wife, Arta, Cody's daughter. Arta had announced several weeks earlier that she and her two children would be making their future home in Kansas City. Boal's spirit makes its presence known with the sound of heavy footsteps pacing back and forth near his former room and, occasionally, the strong odor of cigar smoke. Smoking is not allowed in the wooden building due to the risk of fire, but searches always prove fruitless; the phantom smoker has never been found.

The third and most active ghost is the spirit of Kate Arnold, who arrived in Sheridan from Virginia in 1901. She was an accomplished seamstress and dressmaker and became a resident employee of the hotel around 1909. Her kindness and generosity became legend and earned "Miss Kate," as she was called, the respect and affection of all who knew her.

Miss Kate finally retired when the inn was closed in 1965. She died on March 1, 1968. Her ashes were entombed in the wall of her former room as she had wished. A number of incidents have been reported in the years since Miss Kate's death that seem to indicate that she still keeps a benevolent eye on the inn she loved so much.

I arranged to tour the Sheridan Inn on a warm Sunday in August with longtime guide Frank Brown. Brown launched into a brief history of the inn with all the enthusiasm and knowledge of a man who truly loves his subject.

As we stood in the impressive lobby, he pointed out its original features: the huge, stone fireplace still in working order; the actual front desk where new arrivals registered; and the last of the many cane rocking chairs that once lined the long porch. Though many fine antique pieces have been donated by individuals to help refurnish the inn, only the front desk, the enormous Buffalo Bill Bar, and the rocking chairs are original.

Like many of the volunteers, Mr. Brown believes the inn is haunted.

"I know Miss Kate's here," he told me earnestly. "I always say hello to her when I come in and tell her

what the date is and what the weather is. You don't have to believe in that stuff but I don't believe in taking chances."

He then showed me an iron gate across the stairway that led from the lobby to the upper floors. Several times that gate had been seen to swing open and then close by itself, as if someone invisible had just come through. Could vibrations from passing trains have caused the gate to move? I determined to try it for myself. The gate seemed well-balanced but a definite effort was required to open it.

I followed my guide down a corridor to the huge dining room, where we were joined by Donna Shelly, manager of the inn. The dining room is an architectural marvel, the largest room in Wyoming unsupported by columns. Many banquets, weddings, and dances have taken place there over the years, and the room is still occasionally booked for special events.

"Sometimes we have bands here," Brown said. "If it's a rock band, the sound system won't work right, but if you brought a country band in, everything works. Miss Kate must like country music."

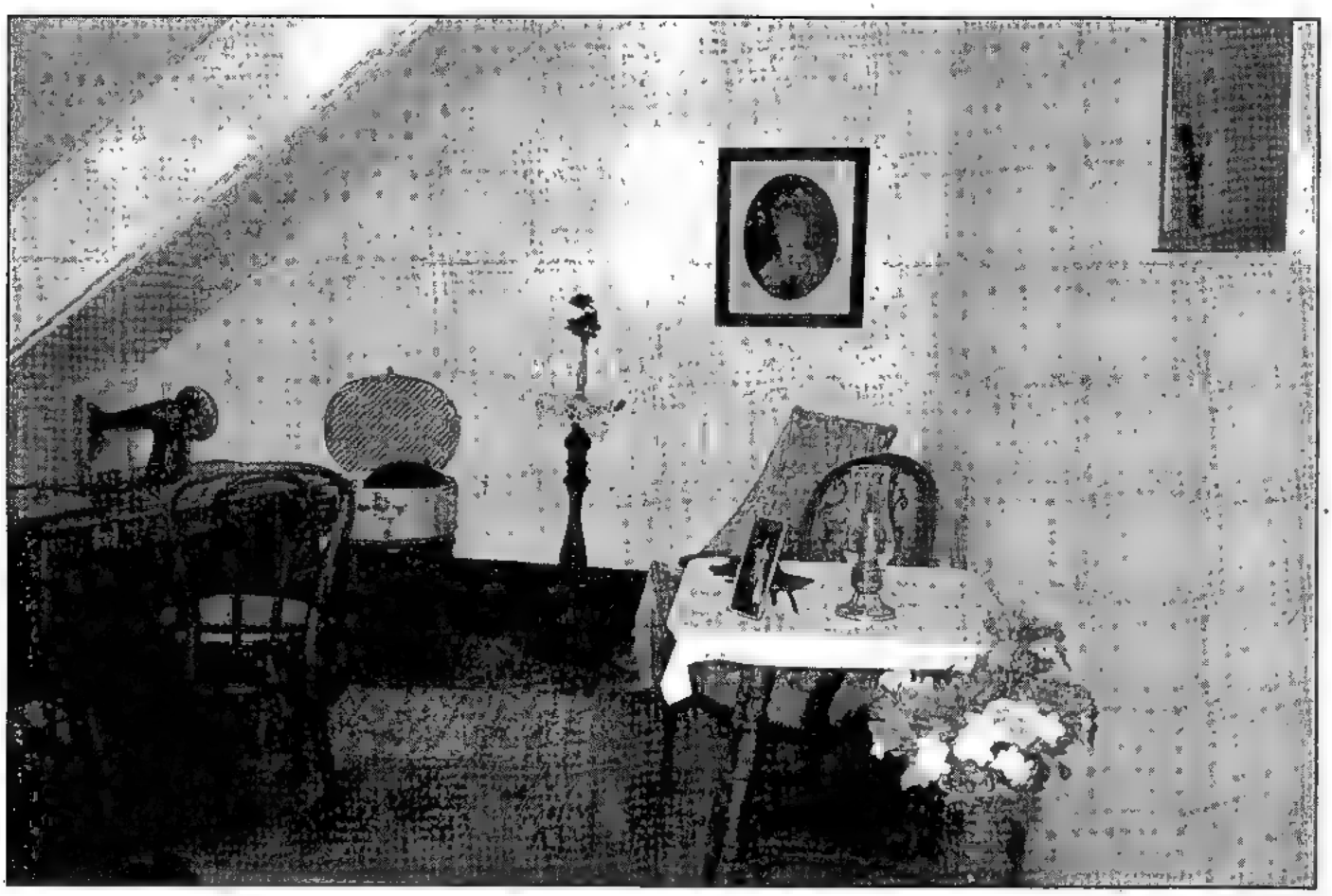
Miss Kate's influence extends even further, however.

"Once my boss decided he wanted to learn to tend bar," Donna said. "I told him he should wait tables first. There must have been eighty people who needed drinks. I found him just standing around in the back, holding a cocktail tray, and I got mad. All of a sudden I saw a church-key—one of those big, old-fashioned bottle openers—lift up by itself. It flew around the corner and slammed down just behind him. I told him that even Miss Kate was mad at him now."

Miss Kate only makes her presence known when there is some sort of problem, and Donna has learned to take such events seriously. She regards Miss Kate as the inn's guardian angel. An incident late one night seems to confirm that Miss Kate still takes an active interest in the inn.

Apparently Kate had been in the habit of checking each of the rooms in the Sheridan Inn before going to bed herself to make sure all candles had been extinguished. During the 1980s, a light was seen moving from room to room on the third floor about 12:30 AM. There was no electrical power to the third floor at that time. Could it have been Miss Kate, checking to see that all was well? Donna Shelly thinks so.

The three of us went upstairs to the bedroom floors. Smoke alarms had been installed as part of the renovation, and they had gone off frequently in the first few weeks. Electricians could not find a problem. Could the ghosts have been experimenting with what must have



Author's Photo

"Miss Kate's" room. The rocking chair beneath Kate Arnold's photograph once began rocking by itself, startling a group of tourists and their tour guide.

seemed to them a fascinating new toy? If so, the novelty has apparently worn off; there have been no false alarms in quite a while.

Miss Kate's room was next. It is much larger than most of the bedrooms because it had served her as a workshop as well as living quarters. An antique sewing machine set near the window, and a rocking chair covered with lace stood in a far corner. On the back wall was a framed photograph of Miss Kate taken around 1901. She had been a lovely young woman with sensitive features and dark, carefully waved hair. There was just a hint of a smile on her lips.

A plastic flower stood in a vase before her picture. I had impulsively bought a yellow rose that morning, although I rarely buy cut flowers. Now I stepped forward and tucked it, with its water tube, into the vase. Somehow it felt right to do so. Brown looked pleased. Miss Kate, it seems, had loved flowers.

Apparently Kate had made her presence known during one of Brown's tours.

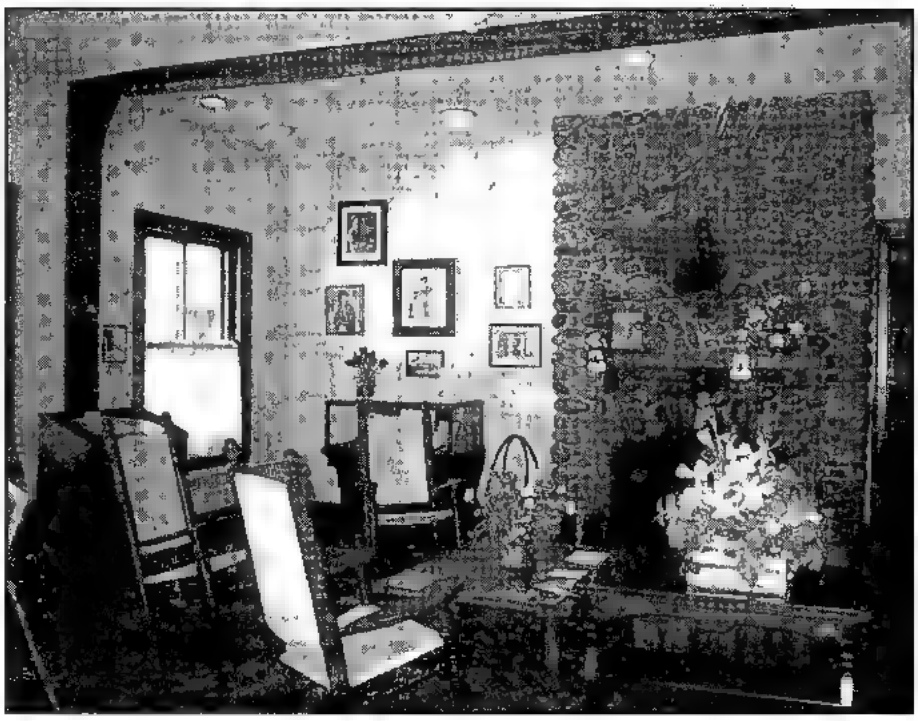
"I had a tour group up in Kate's room once," he said as we all stood in the doorway, "when all of a sudden that rocking chair in the corner began to rock. We don't have any gimmicks here and I don't know why the chair rocked, it just did.

"Well, a woman at my right shoulder bolted out the door and down the stairs. Her husband found her sitting in their car. She wouldn't come back in because she said *that woman* was there."

"So Miss Kate's ghost is sometimes here, in this room?" I asked. I was suddenly glad I had brought the rose.

"I hate to use the terminology ghost,"' he replied. "Because ghosts scare people, and spirits don't."

It was unlikely that Miss Kate, who was widely esteemed in her lifetime for her kindness and generosity, would deliberately set out to scare people now. Perhaps she had just wanted to make her presence known to the group. After all, a lady, even a ghostly lady, should be able to enjoy a few minutes' comfort rocking in the privacy of her own room.



Author's Photo

The main lobby of the Sheridan Inn, with original cane chairs used by Buffalo Bill

Brown led us down a winding set of stairs to the second floor, where rooms had been stripped to the beams so insulation could be installed. We halted outside what had been Horton Boal's room.

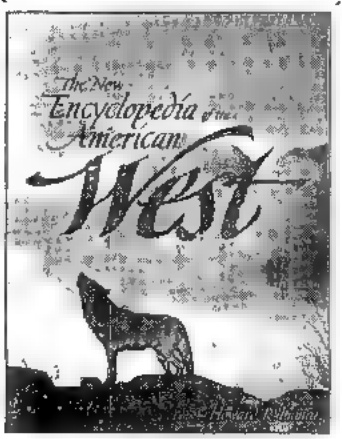
Boal's body had been discovered lying on his bed, a shoe containing a chloroform-soaked sponge over his face. A suicide note apologized for the "trouble" he was about to cause the inn. It was from this room that the phantom footsteps were thought to come, and the strong odor of cigar smoke had been reported on this floor by volunteers a number of times. Did the restless spirit of Buffalo Bill's son-in-law still pace this room more than ninety years after his death? Had he, perhaps, regretted his hasty decision to end his life in those last few seconds before consciousness faded? If so, I hoped that his tormented spirit would find release some day.

Eyewitness reports over the years leave little room for doubt that the Sheridan Inn really is haunted. There is even the evidence of an eerie photo taken on a cold December night in 1996. The residents of Sheridan had turned out to welcome the Santa Claus train and the sounds of merrymaking filled the frosty air. As the celebrants strolled past the darkened, deserted Sheridan Inn, someone had remarked that Miss Kate must surely be enjoying the festivities. On a whim, a local woman who sometimes tends bar at the inn took a snapshot of the building. The photo showed a grayish "cloud" hovering just in front of the inn. The gables and roof can be dimly seen through the cloud.

Was it Miss Kate, or woodsmoke from the inn's fireplaces sent spiraling downward by an errant gust of wind? Perhaps, but the night was calm, and the Sheridan Inn's fireplaces had not been used for days.

The Sheridan Inn has just changed hands, and the new owners hope to re-open for lunches and dinners soon. If you go, ask a staff member to show you the rocking chair in Kate Arnold's room. Perhaps it will rock for you. And be sure to bring a rose for Miss Kate.

The Encyclopedic West



The New Encyclopedia of the American West. Edited by Howard R. Lamar. (Yale University Press, PO Box 209040, New Haven, CT 06520-9040. Maps, illustrations, index. 1,342 pages. $60.00 Cloth.)

There is no such thing as one all-encompassing book on the "complete" history of the West. Heck!, there is not even a single set of books that fits the bill. Nope, not even the late Dan Thrapp's *Encyclopedia of Frontier Biography* or Ron Tyler's *New Handbook of Texas.* But this extensively revised and expanded brand-new version of Lamar's 1977 *Reader's Encyclopedia of the American West* comes close to being the perfect source for us. It will, of course (and alas), be confused with another fine new reference tool, Macmillan's four-volume set, *Encyclopedia of the American West.*

This fat, fat volume is an outstanding—astonishing—farewell present to us from Dr. Lamar as he retires, gracefully, into the western sunset from his long-help post on Yale's history faculty. He is the major historian of the West to be stuck, for years, back East. His more than 1,300 pages means some million and a half words, so this heavy tome is no one-man operation. It took years of work by about 500 people, including 300-odd actual contributors. But Lamar has had to ride herd on these helpers for accuracy and felicity in their copy. He has read, re-read, and re-re-read, then has fine-tuned all entries.

The volume is strongest in biography and its index is limited to personal names. But it is a true encyclopedia, not just a biographical dictionary, and you will find articles on

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general subjects, both broad and narrow, arranged by their key word or phrase in the alphabetical arrangement of the entries. One long entry, for example, is on physiography, that is, physical geography, and on the entire United States, not just the West.

Many of us will particularly appreciate the editor's wide-angle vision, his decision to cover more than just the trans-Mississippi region. He, properly, sees the West and the frontier, each one, as both a place and a process. So coverage extends from Florida to Hawaii, and each of the fifty states has its peculiar "west," its moving frontier, discussed.

Another point about the scope of this work. It is deep as well as wide. There is considerable depth even in the content of the brief entries, but also in terms of the span of time being covered—from pre-historic times all the way to the present. Lamar does not cut off the story of the West with some convenient and arbitrary date, such as 1900, or 1893, the year Professor F.J. Turner and other academics prematurely announced the end of the American frontier. (A time-line is included so that we may get our chronological bearings as we dive into this huge sourcebook.)

All aspects of western life are spelled out here, not just the onmipresent lawmen and badmen, cowboys, soldiers, and Indians. You will also find explorers and mountain men, ghost towns, forts and missions, and such sometimes neglected subjects as artists and writers, women, and ethnic westerners—blacks, Asian-Americans and Mexican-Americans. There is even a sampling of stars of Wild West movies.

Instead of one enormous bibliography at the end of the volume, the compiler has seen to it that each entry carries a few choice suggestions for further reading. And the illustrations are well-chosen to support the text.

Stephen Ambrose, of Lewis and Clark fame, was not exaggerating a bit when he chose the words "monumental achievement" in saluting Howard Lamar's effort. *Nothing* rivals this volume as a handy, one-stop reference source for aficionados of Western Americana.—*Richard H. Dillon, Mill Valley, California.*

Black Hawk War

Utah's Black Hawk War. By John Alton Peterson. (University of Utah Press, 1795 E. South Campus Dr, Suite 101, Salt Lake City, UT 84112-9402. Photographs, maps. 362 pages. $59.95 Cloth; $19.95 Paper.)

In *Utah's Black Hawk War,* Dr. John Alton Peterson has related a detailed account of a little-known conflict between Native Americans and Mormons. (Utah's Black Hawk War should not be confused with the Black Hawk War of 1832 in Illinois.) In Utah Territory, Chief Black Hawk led a combined force of Utes, Navahos, and Paiutes in a lengthy series of stock raids against Mormon settlements.

Brigham Young had pursued a peaceful policy toward the native inhabitants of Utah. "You need never fight the Indians," explained the Mormon leader, "but if you want to get rid of them try to civilize them." Young's strategy worked. By the 1860s, there were more than 100,000 industrious Mormon settlers in Utah, while the Native American population had dwindled precipitously. Black Hawk's band, ravaged by disease, had virtually ceased to exist.

But Black Hawk was aware that Brigham Young had clashed with federal officials over polygamy and theocratic rule in Utah. Black Hawk shrewdly launched systematic livestock raids at the end of the Civil War, when polygamy and "un-American" governmental practices replaced slavery on the national agenda. Young did not want to afford the federal government any excuse to send troops to Utah and thereby increase federal influence in the territory. Instead of calling in the U.S. Army, Young provided a church-run militia, the Nauvoo Legion, and built numerous fortifications to protect the settlers. Information about the clash with

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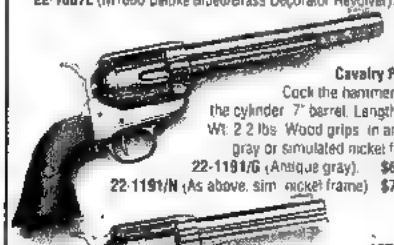

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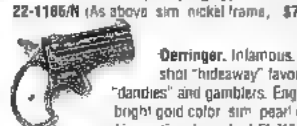

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Black Hawk was suppressed. Hostilities continued for seven years, but little was known about this lengthy conflict outside Utah.

From 1865 through 1867, Black Hawk conducted more than one hundred raids. Thousands of stolen cattle and horses were sold through a network of white and Hispanic middlemen. More than seventy settlers were killed, and perhaps twice as many raiders were slain. Black Hawk was severely wounded in a fight at Gravelly Ford, and he made peace with the Mormons in 1867. But the raids continued sporadically until 1872, two years after Black Hawk died.

The author has chronicled the Black Hawk War thoroughly and with fascinating anaylsis. He regards Black Hawk—bold and clever and possessed of exceptional organizational abilities—as a Native American leader who should rank alongside Tecumseh, Cochise, Geronimo, and Sitting Bull. *Utah's Black Hawk War* fills a neglected but important chapter of western history.—*Bill O'Neal, Carthage, Texas.*

Rocky Mountain Lady

A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains. By Isabella Lucy Bird, edited by Ernest S. Bernard. (University of Oklahoma Press, 4100 28th Avenue NW, Norman, OK 73069. Map, illustrations, photographs. 288 pages. $24.95 Cloth.)

Originally published in 1879, this first-rate memoir, a collection of letters written by an amazing Victorian woman, Isabella Bird, chronicles her adventures of 1873, in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado. Considered a minor classic in travel writing, especially by a woman, the book has staying power, being reprinted several times over the past century.

In 1873, Bird came to the Colorado Rocky Mountains, spending the summer and fall in beautiful Estes Park. She fell into the trend of the times, mountain climbing. She became obsessed with Longs Peak, above Estes Park, and desperately wanted to become the first woman to climb the mountain. Her account of her ascent to the peak of the mountain, with Jim Nugent, the legendary guide and scout known in Colorado as "Rocky Mountain Jim," is absolutely thrilling, as well as her many descriptions of the scenery, weather, and living conditions. Anyone who has climbed Longs Peak, would have to admire Bird's courage and stamina.

In one of her many colorful letters contained in this book, is her account of Rocky Mountain Jim. Bird writes, "Though his manner was certainly bolder and freer than that of a gentleman generally, no imaginary fault could be found. He was very agreeable as a man of culture as well as a child of nature."

Isabella Bird's book has been a favorite of mine and has graced my bookshelves for years. Learning of the new release edited by Ernest S. Bernard, my first thought was, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." Yet this new addition includes commentary and annotation, a map, additional photos, and an appendix.

While Bird writes with great authority, she was often confused and conveys wrong information. For anyone who has been in the Colorado Rockies, this is easy to do. However, Bernard sets us straight. By using her colorful details, he manages to discover the exact route Bird traveled during her ascent to the crest of Colorado's Longs Peak.

Women like Isabella Bird were one of the great legacies of the Victorian era. For those who have never known her story, this reprint will breathe new life into her story.—*Linda R. Wommack, Denver, Colorado.*

Bloody Kansas

War to the Knife: Bleeding Kansas, 1854-1861. By Thomas Goodrich. (Stackpole Books, 5067 Ritter Road, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055. 296 pages. $29.95 Cloth.)

The Wild West got its bullet-riddled start about half-way to the Rockies with the bitter struggle between the Free Soilers and Border Ruffians of Kansas Territory.

War to the Knife takes the reader along a trail of fire and death where as many perished violently in the

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short period of eight years as those meeting their end from western gunfire during the next twenty-five!

The opponents on both sides of the slavery issue came to what they called KT filled with an indomitable sense of right and armed to the teeth. Missourians and other adherents of "Property Rights" brought squirrel rifles, shotguns, and other man-killers while the Free Soilers arrived with packing cases labeled "Beecher's Bibles." Actually the Brooklyn devine's name had been taken, more or less, in vain for the fiesty emigrants' boxes were jammed with the latest in murderous Sharps carbines.

After a spell of midnight maneuvering, claim-jumping, stock rustling, and the flashing of Bowie knives and Arkansas Toothpicks, necessary adjuncts to a Wild West in miniature, the "Balloon Went Up" on November 21, 1855 with the killing of a Free Soiler, Charles Dow.

Though this shooting was ignited by an argument over a jumped claim and not the core issue of slavery within the territory, border warfare had begun. In addition to Dow's demise, fuel was added to the raging fire when emboldened Border Ruffians killed Thomas Barber of Lawrence, Kansas, who had been out cutting wood. Then the War to the Knife continued to mount with the deaths of three southerners—one by his own sentry, another from a falling tree, and the third in a drunken row.

But May 21, 1856, was the Day of the Border Ruffian when hundreds galloped into Lawrence along with a battery of four cannons. This terrifying sight was only intensified by the shouted threats of U.S. Senator David Atchison of Missouri, known as Old Bourbon: "We're in Lawrence with Southern Rights inscribed on our Banner—and if any man or woman dare stand before you, blow them to hell with a chunk of cold lead!"

When the townsfolk scattered in well-advised flight, the invaders plundered the stores, stables, homes, and Lawrence's two newspapers, as well as shelling the new Free State Hotel. Yet when the exultant southerners left the prostrate town at nightfall only one death could be attributed to the attack—a Border Ruffian flattened by the hotel's collapsing wall.

Heading a small but determined band of Abolitionists composed of his five sons and a few like-minded neighbors, John Brown won a bloody reputation by several particularly vicious raids with prisoners, actually, put to the sword. But though he met more than his match in a tremendous scrap at Osawatomie, Kansas, in August 1856, he gained the nickname of Osawatomie Brown that stuck with him all the way to Harper's Ferry.

After the fighting of 1856 there were still some bands of Missourian Border Ruffians in the territory but little by little the Free Soilers gained and maintained the upper hand till the yerritory became a state at the start of the Civil War, which people said began in Kansas.

Many Kansans were scorched by the territory's incendiary years. Among them was a silent, retiring young man from Ohio, a believer in states' rights, who went by the name of Charley Hart or William Quantrill. He and his troopers gutted Lawrence in August 1863, leaving over 150 dead. Another young man named James Butler Hickok learned the deadly art of "Six-Shooter-Ology" while serving as bodyguard to the dashing Free Soil general, Jim Lane.

Two other young Kansans among hundreds also felt the impact of the unending tensions and alarms of the undeclared war. Ten year old William Cody saw his father manhandled by a pack of Missourians and wept that he wasn't "big enough to kill all those Bad Men!" Another, just eight years old at the end of the decade, was Dave Rudabaugh. No matter where he rode across the West over the years working as a lawman, cowboy, or hardened member of the Billy the Kid gang, he was the last of the Border Ruffians.—*Bill Garwood, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania.*

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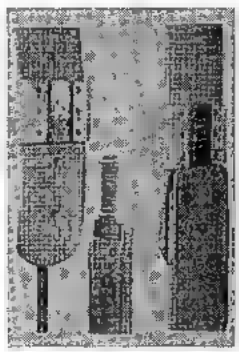

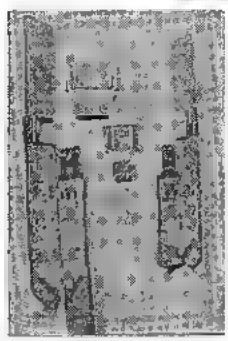

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Kirby Grant, the Mountie

Most western buffs are not only interested in the historical personages of the nineteenth century, but also the actors who portrayed cowboys and Indians in the twentieth century. Who can forget Roy Rogers, Gene Autry, and Kirby Grant?

Kirby Grant is certainly not so well known, but Larry M. Plaster, Bald Knob, West Virginia, inquires about him. The name had come up in a recent game of trivia. Plaster asks, "In the 1950s there was a movie produced about a Canadian Mountie who had a white dog, billed as a 'wonder dog Chinook.' The actor favored Kirby Grant. Did he ever play a Mountie?"

Your trivial pursuit is correct. Kirby Grant Horn was born either in 1911 or 1914 in Montana. His résumé identifies him as a "Dutch-Scottish-American leading man."

Grant appeared in many western films, among them *Red River Range* (1939), *The Lawless Breed* (1947), *Trail of the Yukon* (1950), *Snow Dog* (1951), and *Yukon Vengeance* (1955). In 1953-54 he was in the television series *Sky King*. Although he is best remembered for playing a Mountie, Grant also appeared in such notable films as *The Court Martial of Billy Mitchell* with Gary Cooper (1955).

Arizona Mary

Attempting to trace historic personalities by their nicknames alone can be difficult. It becomes worse when dealing with women. They were considered, in the minds of many in the West, "second class citizens."

Via the Internet a question comes from Marion Weaver, who is seeking information on a character named "Arizona Mary," possibly a fictional character although more likely a real person who may have been a prostitute. With little more to go on than this vague name, I'm afraid a positive identification is next to impossible. Hopefully a reader can help us identify Arizona Mary.

A.H. Lewis and Wolfville

Ronald Mance, Cicero, Illinois, inquires about Alfred Henry Lewis,

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Lieutenant Austin Henely and the Sappa Creek Controversy

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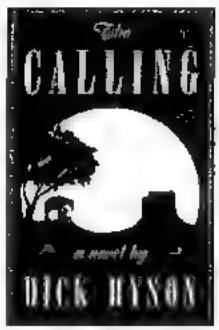

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perhaps best known as Bat Masterson's unofficial press agent. When Lewis was editor of the popular magazine *Human Life*, he talked Bat into contributing seven articles about various westerners—Ben Thompson, Wyatt Earp, Luke Short, Doc Holliday, Bill Tilghman, Masterson himself, and Buffalo Bill Cody. Although western enthusiasts are grateful that these articles were written, we also appreciate Lewis' own writing. In the Wolfville series, Lewis created a western town so realistic that many people are disappointed when they learn such a town existed only in Lewis' imagination.

Lewis was born perhaps in 1858 (the birth date is not certain, as it is also given as January 20, 1855) in Cleveland, Ohio. He first became a lawyer, then dabbled in politics.

After serving as a prosecuting attorney in Cleveland, he went west for the first time, working as a cowboy on ranches in Kansas. He also worked in the Cimarron country of Oklahoma, then in Texas and Arizona. His apparent first newspaper work was with the Las Vegas *Optic*, in a New Mexico community that had seen plenty of noted western characters trod its streets.

By 1885 he was in Kansas City, Missouri, where his brother was editor of the Kansas City *Times*. In 1890 Alfred contributed an imaginary interview with a character identified as "The Old Cattleman." This brought him no money but did result in recognition; his second story earned him the magnificent sum of $360. This also brought him credibility, and he joined the *Times* staff. Later, he became a correspondent for the Chicago *Times*. By 1894, Lewis was head of the William Randolph Hearst Washington bureau. He is best remembered for his novels centered in Wolfville, but he also wrote novels dealing with political life, the police, and the "underworld." His six western novels worthy of reading and rereading are: *Wolfville* (1897), *Sandburrs* (1900), *Wolfville Days* (1902), *Wolfville Nights* (1902), *Wolfville Folks* (1908) and *Faro Nell and Her Friends* (1913).

Lewis died on December 23,

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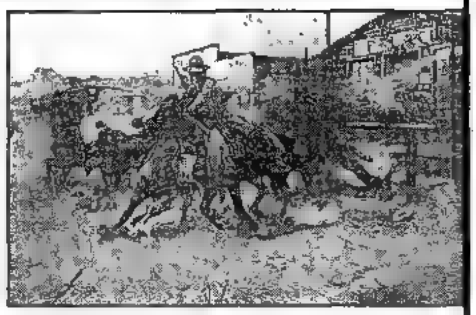

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1914, in New York City. His novels and articles in *Human Life* make good reading, but a healthy dose of fiction is mixed in with the fact.

Masterson's articles first appeared in 1907, and thanks to historian Jack DeMattos they were all published in book form on their seventy-fifth anniversary, entitled *Famous Gunfighters of the Western Frontier* by W.B. "Bat" Masterson with annotations by DeMattos. Wrote Jack in the introduction: "He [Masterson], along with Alfred Henry Lewis, must bear a good share of the responsibility for originating an endless chain of fiction, passed off as fact, that endures to this day."

Who Was the Bondsman?

Several readers have asked this one: Who put up the bail money for Wyatt Earp when he was arrested for horse theft in 1871?

A grand jury at Fort Smith, Arkansas, found that three men, Wyatt S. Earp, Edward Kennedy, and John Shown, had on March 28, 1871, in the Cherokee Nation, "feloniously did steal take and drive and carry away two horses[,] each horse of the value of one hundred dollars[;] two mares each mare of the value of one hundred dollars[;] two geldings each of said gelding of the value of one hundred dollars then and there being found the property goods and chattels of and William Keys."

Witnesses were identified as James Keys, Anna Shown and William Keys. Deputy United States Marshal J.G. Owens arrested Earp and Kennedy on April 6. Shown's name does not appear as being arrested by Owens. Both Earp and Kennedy were ordered "to find bail in the sum of Five Hundred Dollars Each," but the remaining records do not show who provided the $500. Kennedy stood trial on June 5 and was acquitted. Earp never stood trial, apparently just riding out without regard for his bondsman. So, who put up the money?

I was recently able to look through the original records in the National Archives branch at Fort Worth, Texas. Fourteen sheets of documentation are in the file but

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none give the name of a bondsman. None of the remaining documents have Earp's signature. At some point there were documents which had been signed by Earp, but they are missing from the original files.

Gangster Hardin?

Ricky Conkin of Kingsport, Tennessee, recently emailed this question: "Was John Wesley Hardin ever associated with a gang?"

Well, it depends on your definition of what constituted a gang in the late nineteenth century. The word generally means "a group of people associated together in some way," but a more specific meaning is that a gang is an "organized group of criminals." Thus one may legitimately say that at times Hardin led a gang, but he was never a member, as he traditionally took the role of lead dog. Rather, his "gang" consisted of friends and family, usually cousins, who respected his leadership and marksmanship. When on the run, Hardin became a "loner," much like Bill Longley.

Hardin spent his twenty-first birthday with family in Comanche, Texas. When he and Deputy Charles Webb traded shots, Hardin had at his side Jim Taylor, a friend, and cousin Bud Dixon. All three men were considered the slayers of Webb. In the aftermath of the Webb killing, outraged Texas Rangers and townspeople lynched brother Joe Hardin and cousins Bud and Tom Dixon; cousins Alec Barekman and Ham Anderson were shot to death. Taylor and Wes escaped.

Although not of the variety of gang that robbed banks and trains, Hardin's relatives and friends were extremely loyal and considered him their leader. So yes, in a sense, Hardin had a gang.

If you have a question, send it to Chuck Parsons, Western Publications, P.O. Box 2107, Stillwater, OK 74076. Please keep questions brief. Sign your full name and address, including zip code. Names will be published if question is used. Space limitations may not permit us to use all questions. Due to the volume of mail, we cannot forward correspondence to people whose questions appear in "Answer Man."

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Wild Lewis Boys: Terrors of Newton County

by Vesta-Nadine Severs

Neosho, Mo July 15th 188?,
Dear Mother,

...We go to see Aunt Eunice and Uncle George once a month regular... Our relation down here all very respectable except Prior's boys they are desperadoes. On the 4th July they went down to Seneca in this county and waylaid two men on the public road out 3 miles out of town and robbed them of $50 00 they then went into town and took part in the celebration. The two men they robbed came into town in the meantime and recognized them. They then tried to arrest them. These boys defied the authorities with two revolvers each, they kept off several hundred men and walked leisurely out of town and came back into town afterwards and stole two horses went into the country that night about 3 miles to a dance, left the two horses they taken at Seneca and stole two others there.

There is $250.00 dollars reward offered for their arrest and everybody seems to be looking for them and nobody wants to find then. Prior told us they were around in the country yet, eat breakfast the other day at his house. They have shot several men in drunken rows theretofor and they are the terror of all this country. These boys names are Jim and George Lewis....

From your son and daughter,
Lucy A. Shook
H.C. Shook

Author's Collection

George Lewis, outlaw and bootlegger, with a sample of his moonshine. The girls in the photo are unidentified, but may have been young relatives.

I'd heard all my life about my great-uncles Jim and George Lewis. When my father gave me a typed copy of the above letter, I wanted to learn who the writer was. How were they related to us? How were they related to Jim and George Lewis?

Lucy Ann Lewis Shook was a granddaughter of Fielding and Mary Gambill Lewis. The mystery of Lucy was recently cleared up by Carolyn Clouse of Bend, Oregon, who received a copy of the above letter from someone in San Francisco. Lucy was writing to her mother, Elizabeth Moore Lewis, who had married Fielding's son, Charles Lewis. Charles was an uncle to James and George Lewis.

The Fielding Lewis family originated in Virginia. He and his descendants, over the years, migrated westward, settling for a time in North Carolina and Tennessee, where Fielding is buried, before arriving in Missouri.

Uncle Jim Lewis was the first son of Prior and Nancy C. (Hubbard) Lewis. Jim (James) was the oldest boy and George followed his birth by five years. When Jim and George got too rowdy at home, their parents forced them to leave. Being without a guiding hand, "they got into devilment. They never should have been outlaws," said the late F.M. Severs.

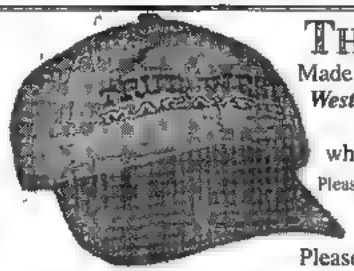
According to Severs family legend, they made at least one ride with Jesse James. But mostly, the brothers seemed to operate as a team.

In Goodspeeds' 1888 *History of Newton, Barry, Lawrence & McDonald Counties Missouri*, in a section on the "History of Newton County," is the following quote, "The capture of Jim and George Lewis, known as the Lewis boys, the terrors of Newton County, was effected by Sheriff [James R.] McElhany in July, 1882, aided by Sam Jones and Elliott Carnes.

"They were found in the Ratliff Cave, one mile north of Neosho, and surrendered without trouble. Mrs. Seavers [Severs], it is alleged, gave the information which led to their arrest. They were charged with robbing [two men named] Burke & Hall."

In the same volume, from the section on "History of Lawrence County," it is reported that "In October, 1883, during the administration of Sheriff Ryan, a special jail delivery was made. James and George Lewis, the Newton County bandits, James King and his wife May and Tom Easton, all made a break for liberty, but J.R. Lee and one Caldwell remained. James Lewis, James King and May King were recaptured."

An accomplished blacksmith, Jim Lewis ran a shop in Neosho, located one block south of the old England Hotel. He was in a penitentiary



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once and escaped by cutting through the bars with knives. Another time he fashioned a key from a spike to fit the cell door.

"It takes a smart man to get out of a penitentiary," said Francis Marion Severs of Neosho. "My Uncle Jim Lewis was a smart man. In fact, he was the smartest blacksmith in this part of the woods."

"If you crossed Uncle George's path going the wrong direction, he'd as soon shoot as pause to let you by. People feared his 'blue-streak cussin' and his meanness. He'd cuss a mile-a-minute using some of the darndest words you'd ever heard," F.M. Severs said.

George was an excellent marksman, as were most of that generation and location, and owned a pair of pistols, which he called "Old Silversides," given him by a friend. Needless to say, George was very fond of Silversides, with their ivory handles, and never let them be far from him. Delmer Severs, F.M.'s son, remembered seeing the pistols when he was young. After George's death, they mysteriously disappeared.

Once, Sheriff Jim McElhaney raised a posse to catch Jim and George for some devilment, probably robbery. The posse and sheriff were in the heavily timbered Elm Springs area when they suddenly met the Lewis boys face to face.

The timber made for close shooting quarters. What happened was ...nothing. No one in the posse reached for their gun, and the Lewis brothers rode away untouched. They undoubtedly had a big laugh once they were out of ear shot.

Another time, around 1903, Jim was in Indian Territory trying to escape a pursuing marshal who had wounded the outlaw. It's said a bullet left a three-inch hole near his heart, and he was glad the marshal was such a "poor shot." When finally caught, Jim was transported to the Newton County jail in Neosho. Jim told Sheriff John Beavers that he wouldn't be there long. But Beavers figured he wasn't lucid and just "talking through his hat" since Jim's wound was so serious. He knew Jim had lost a lot of blood and was weak. A man in that condition couldn't go any great distance and live. It was probably the last crime he would commit.

Not quite a week later, the jail was as sound as ever, but one of its occupants was missing. Jim had escaped at night and gone to his mother's house near the old Benton School. From there, he went to the backside of the Odd Fellow's Cemetery to hide.

If Jim had remained in jail one more day, he would he been out on bond because friends were putting up his bail.

In October 1995, Rozene Coley said her Uncle Jim Lewis hid in her parents' barn, on South High Street in Neosho. He threw pennies to cousin Lennie Severs, Roene, and her brother, Blakie. She also said her father and her brother, George, provided food for the outlaw while he hid in the woods behind the cemetery.

Toward the end of the week, near sunset, George rode his bicycle up the hill to the cemetery, taking Jim his evening meal. The only sound

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Author's Collection

The copper drum used by George Lewis to make moonshine, which probably contributed to his "chronic gastritis."

was the squeaking of the bike. Then a clippity-clop overtook the squeaks.

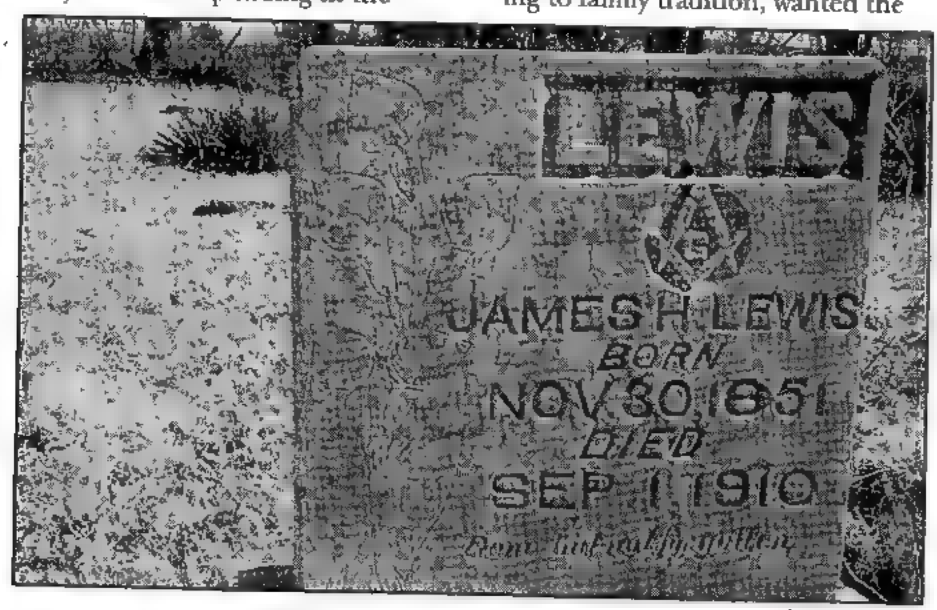
Looking over his shoulder, George saw the sheriff and a deputy riding in a one-horse buggy. George waited until they were within hearing distance, then shouted, "Turn around go back before I kill you!"

"You're going to Jim," hollered the sheriff.

"Yeah, I sure am," yelled George, "you sure as - - - - ain't!" Reluctantly, the sheriff turned his buggy around and left.

That night Jim vacated the cemetery and took up hiding in the woods behind McElhaney's barn, six miles west of Neosho. George worked there taking care of McElhaney's horses. One day, a man drove through the woods and Jim thought he acted rather strangely. That night, Jim left for Joplin. Once there, he borrowed a horse and buggy and drove to his daughter's house in Oklahoma Territory. He lived near his daughter for the next seven year s.

While living near Cloud Chief, Oklahoma, a man gave Jim Lewis a fine mare. Jim's son-in-law, according to family tradition, wanted the



Author's Collection

Jim Lewis' headstone at Elm Springs Cemetery, Elm Springs, Missouri. Photo by Stanley Robertson, a distant nephew of the outlaw Lewis brothers.

In the November issue of *True West*:

The Solomonville Stagecoach Robbery. *By Harold L. Edwards.* A mild-mannered, Arizona school teacher and frequent stage passenger devises a plan to rob the United States Mail of uncirculated money orders.

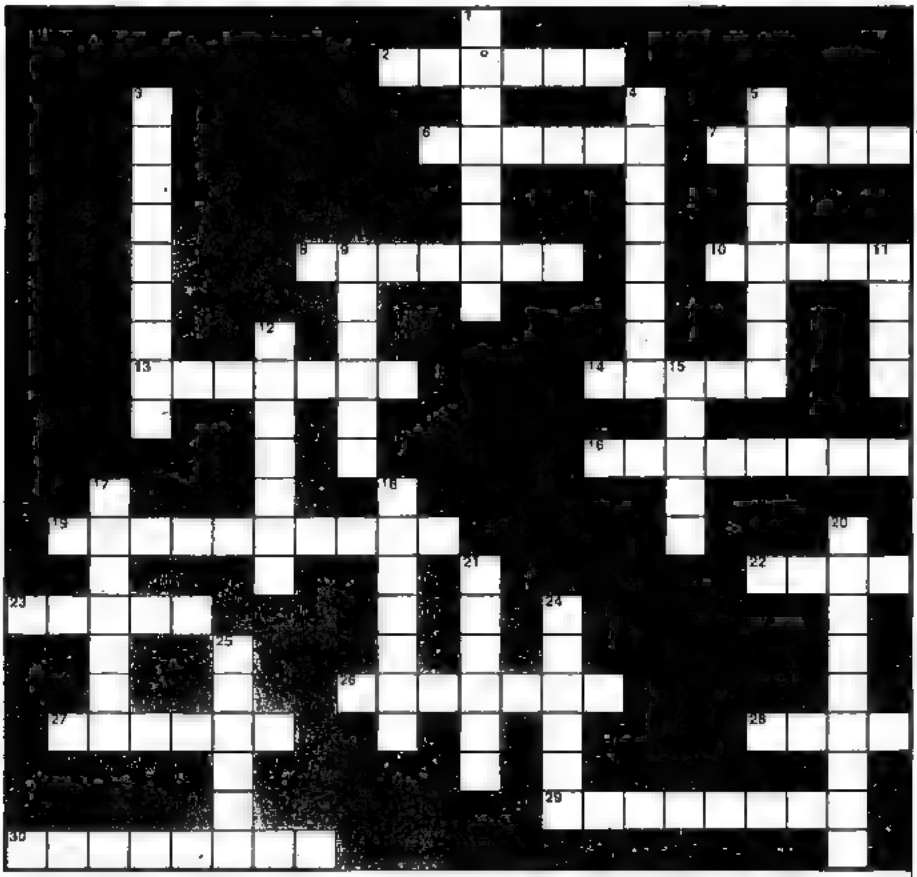
Charlie Rath and the Incident on Chavez Creek. *By Randy D. Smith.* Kansas rancher Charlie Rath confronts a band of drunken, marauding Indians with nothing more than raw courage and a pair of Navy Colts.

Odysseys on the Idaho Trail. *By Hank Corless.* An enterprising Idaho businessman and the madame of a bawdy house team up to finance a long, dangerous cattle drive from east Texas to Idaho Territory.

Fight to the Finish. *By Ron Jackson.* "Gentleman" Jim Corbett and "Battling" Joe Choynski trade blows for twenty-seven bloody rounds during what boxing historians consider "the most brutal fight of all time."

Honorable Intentions. *By Shelley R. Frear.* With few soldiers available to protect western settlements during the Civil War, a plan was devised to recruit the finest warriors from the four Pawnee clans and employ them as frontier scouts.

Look for the November 1999 *True West* on newsstands October 1, 1999.

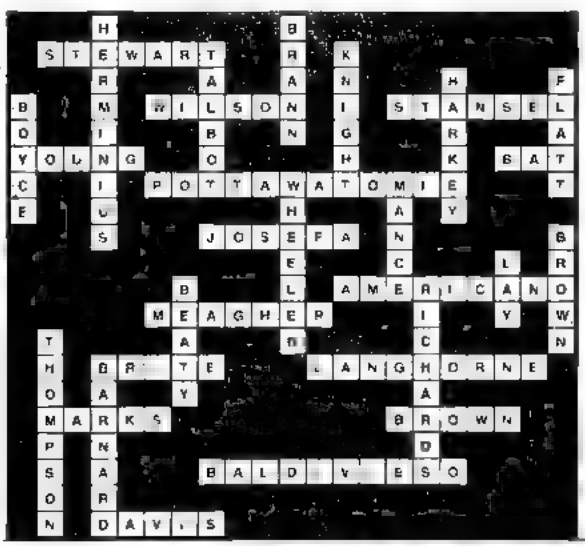


Across

2. Waltz's caretaker
6. Accused of Hill murder
7. Photographed "dead eyes"
8. Cowboy Jack Lewis saw one
10. Hataali Nez was accused of being it
13. Ripped witches apart
14. Terrors of Newton County
16. Indentured by Captain Williams
19. Chaco Canyon archeologist
22. Killed himself at the Sheridan Inn
23. Movie mountie
26. Captain Williams' slayer
27. Killed Charlie Webb
28. Arkansas horse thief?
29. Inn with 69 gables
30. Home of the St. James

Down

1. Hidetown
3. George Lewis' elixir
4. La Llorona
5. *Occidental* ghost
9. Kate _____ haunts the Sheridan Inn
11. Spring Valley murder victim
12. Built the St. James
15. Lost the Lost Dutchman
17. Don Miguel ____
18. Legendary naked outlaw/dancer
20. The Weeping Woman
21. Owner of the Silver King Mine
24. Fantasmas
25. Missing Dutchman miner



Solution to last month's puzzle.

horse. Jim wouldn't sell, trade, or give her away. "He was mighty proud of that horse," my grandfather said.

According to Delmer Severs, my father, Jim still had a bounty on his head, which probably wasn't the first time. His daughter's husband still wanted that horse, and his son, Robert Hughes, wanted the bounty money.

On September 1, 1910, Jim heard his son-in-law and Hughes arguing over a wagon. Words kept getting more and more out of hand. The men were quite angry by this time. Finally the son yelled, "I'm going to kill you!"

Now, Jim Lewis had done some bad things in his life, but killing family was not one of them. Up to this point, Jim had only listened, but now he quietly said, "Aw, you shouldn't do that." The son whirled around and shot Jim through the mouth, killing him.

Jim's body was returned to Elm Springs for burial. George always felt the incident was planned, but no one really knows for certain.

After Jim died, things just weren't the same for George. He settled down, farmed some, and made moonshine. Dave Hearell showed me the copper tub that George allegedly used to make his liquor. There wasn't any apparatus with it to deem it a still, so I could only take his word for it.

George Lewis died in Neosho of self-inflicted razor cuts on his wrists.

Oddly, George's death certificate states the cause of death as "chronic gastritis." He was buried September 18, 1927.

Aunt Rozene said she watched the undertaker come "lay out Uncle George. Both Uncle George and Uncle Jim were short men. The undertaker handled George's stiff body easily, tossing and turning it like a piece of cord wood."

Such was the demise of the wild Lewis boys, "Terrors of Newton County" in the 1880s.

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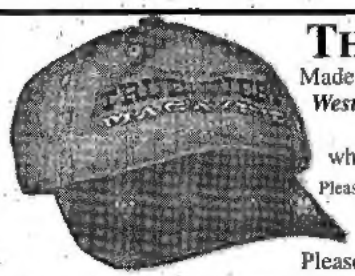

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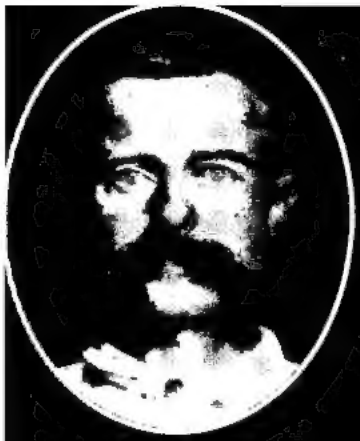

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